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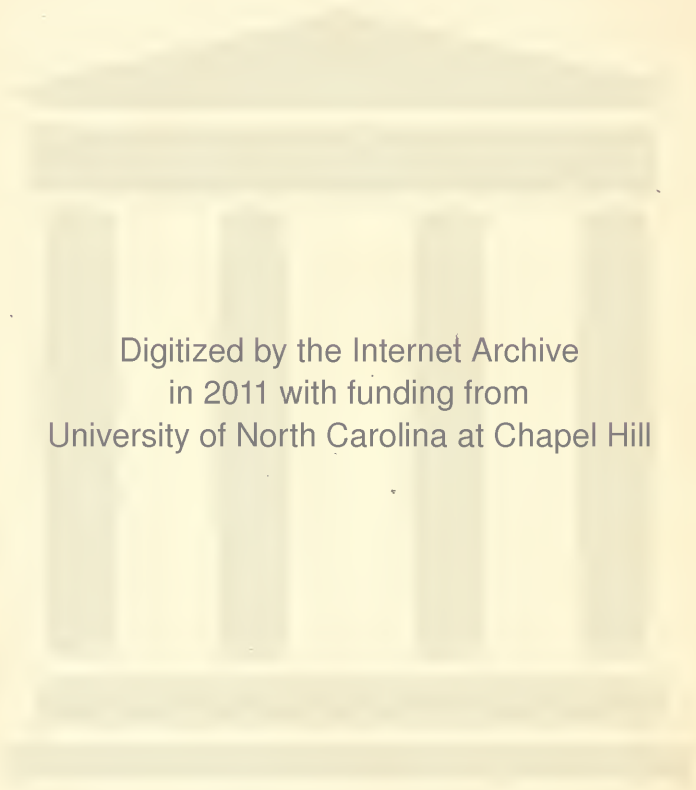
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**GASTON COUNTY:  
ECONOMIC AND  
SOCIAL**



By S. H. HOBBS, JR.  
UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA  
FEBRUARY, 1920

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# GASTON COUNTY: ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL

By S. H. HOBBS, JR.

A LABORATORY STUDY IN  
THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH  
CAROLINA, DEPARTMENT OF  
RURAL ECONOMICS AND  
SOCIOLOGY

THE EXPENSE OF PUBLICATION AND DISTRIBUTION IS BORNE BY  
THE ADVERTISING OF WIDE-AWAKE AND GENEROUS BUSINESS  
MEN. WE WISH TO EXTEND TO THEM OUR HEARTIEST APPRECI-  
ATION AND BEST WISHES

FEBRUARY, 1920

RALEIGH  
EDWARDS & BROUGHTON PRINTING CO.  
1920

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## Acknowledgments

I wish, first, to extend my thanks to the business men of Gaston for making possible the publication of this booklet by furnishing the business manager with liberal advertisements. I am sure the citizens of the county this bulletin is trying to serve will extend to these firms their heartiest support.

The publication of this booklet was made possible by the efforts of Mr. T. J. Brawley of Gastonia, a Senior at the University. He has worked untiringly and has displayed good business abilities as Business Manager of this publication. The advertisements were secured by Mr. Brawley by letters and in personal visits to the concerns during the Christmas holidays.

The first chapter in this publication, The Historical Background, is the work of Mr. J. J. Rhyne of Bessemer City, a member of the 1919 class at the University. This chapter was prepared by Mr. Rhyne during his Senior year, being a laboratory study in the Department of Rural Economics and Sociology.

The data in this booklet have been collected largely from the files of the Department of Rural Economics and Sociology, founded and guarded by an untiring worker and faithful public servant, Prof. E. C. Branson. His aid has been invaluable in shaping this booklet for publication.

S. H. HOBBS, JR.,

*Department of Rural Economics and Sociology,  
University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, N. C., February, 1920.*

# A Brief History of Gaston County

## Origin, Location, and Early History

Gaston county was formed from the neighboring county of Lincoln in 1846. The county gets its name from the Hon. William Gaston, a noted supreme court judge of North Carolina. The bill authorizing the erection of the county also contained a provision for the site of the county seat, the same to be within two miles of Long Creek Baptist church. In accordance with the authorization, the town of Dallas was laid off and built. Dallas is named in honor of the Hon. George M. Dallas, Vice-President of the United States in 1844. This town remained the county seat until 1911 when, after a very hotly contested election on the part of those wishing the county seat to remain at Dallas and those desiring it to be removed to Gastonia, the latter won, and Gastonia, from 1911, has been the capital city of the county.

Gaston county lies in the southwestern part of the state and borders the South Carolina line. It is bounded on the east by Mecklenburg county, on the north by Lincoln county, and on the west by Cleveland. The northern and southern boundaries are straight, while the eastern and western are irregular, the eastern boundary being formed by the Catawba river.

Gaston is one of the smaller counties of the state, being seventieth in size, and containing about 370 square miles, or 236,800 acres, with a dimension of  $17\frac{1}{2}$  miles north and south and an average width of 20 miles east and west. The county is situated in the Piedmont region, with a view of the foot-hills of the Blue Ridge, which can be seen from the higher points in the county with clear weather prevailing.

The land in general slopes toward the southeast, the extreme eastern side to the south, and the extreme northwest corner to the northeast. The surface is from gently rolling to hilly and breaking into several mountainous areas. The mountain peaks are Pinnacle and Crowders mountains of the Kings Mountain chain, with heights above the sea-level of 1,705 feet and 1,624 feet respectively. The other two peaks worthy of mention are Spenser mountain in the east-central part of the county, and Payseur mountain to the northwest central part of the county. Spenser mountain gets its name from one Zeb Spenser, a Tory in the Revolutionary War, who resided there. The story goes that he was caught, tried, and condemned to be shot. He begged hard for his life and promised allegiance to the Revolutionary cause if he were spared. He was allowed to live, oath being taken on an old almanac, in the absence of a Bible.

In the vicinity of Cherryville the elevation above sea-level is about 1,000 feet and around Bessemer City 900 feet, while the mountain there is considerably higher.

The South Fork river which flows across the county in a southeasterly direction, with the Catawba, which forms the eastern boundary, constitute the two principal streams, although there are several creeks traversing different parts of the county that are of minor importance.

As regards railroad transportation the county is advantageously located, being crossed from east to west by the main line of the Southern Railroad, and from north to south by the Carolina and Northwestern Railroad. The Seaboard Air Line Railway enters the county at Mt. Holly, crosses the northeastern part of the county into Lincoln county, and again enters Gaston to the northwest, passing through Cherryville. The fourth railroad is the Piedmont and Northern which comes only as far as Gastonia by way of Belmont and Mt. Holly. The ample railway facilities have been of great benefit in helping to develop Gaston county along all lines. The ample railway mileage has made it possible and easy for Gaston, through its textile industry, to develop into its present position of importance—namely, as the textile center of North Carolina. And what is more, Gaston county leads the whole United States in the number of cotton mills. The mills now number nearly 100.

There are more towns in Gaston than in any other county of North Carolina. Gastonia, the county seat and chief commercial center, has a population in 1920 of 12,871 while Dallas, Cherryville, Mt. Holly, Belmont, Bessemer City, Stanley, Lowell, and McAdenville are all thrifty business towns. Some of the smaller towns, each of which has one or more cotton mills, are High Shoals, Hardins, Mountain Island, Tuckaseege, Phillipsburg, Mayworth, and Spenser Mountain.

The large number of towns offer good markets for all farm products grown in the county. The demand so far exceeds the supply obtainable that high prices generally prevail. Cotton, the chief crop, finds a ready market, a great amount being consumed by the mills at home. Other crops are corn, wheat, oats, the hay crops, and a number of well paying truck crops, grown for the local markets and mill village sections. The usual local market problem is made much simpler by the big demand for home-grown products on the part of the mill operatives. This one factor has doubtless contributed greatly toward safeguarding the farm and the farming industry, and enabling the rural sections to keep pace with the progress and development of the urban areas. The attractive wage paid the mill operative certainly would have tended to draw, and has drawn, many people from the ranks of the farmers. However, Gaston is the most densely populated rural county of the state, as well as the center of the textile industry of

North Carolina—a fact which goes far toward proving that farming can be made a successful business alongside the cotton mill industry.

The history of Gaston county can very easily be divided into two distinct epochs. The earlier period, representing the period of slow progress and development, has its beginning in early colonial days with the coming of the first settlers to this region, and extends on down to the year 1872. The year 1872 is very important in the history of Gaston county. It marks the date of the building of the first railroad through the county. The later period, representing the period of rapid progress and development, begins with the year 1872 and extends on down to the present time. It is this later division with which we are particularly concerned, because it has been since the year 1872 that Gaston has emerged from a position as one of the most backward counties of the state to a position of first importance. This period has seen its transformation from banner whiskey-making county to the banner cotton-mill county of the state, which position she now holds. It has witnessed an unprecedented increase in the county's population among other counties in the state, Gaston having risen from the 48th place in 1880, to 10th place in 1910. And it must be remembered that Gaston is a small county—only 29 other counties of the state are smaller.

The earlier historical period of Gaston county is one in which we have nothing to boast of. Progress was slow. Population was scarce. The county roads, the only means of transportation, were rough and very badly cut up, especially during the winter months. Agriculture was the chief means of making a livelihood and the absence of ample marketing facilities made it necessary for the farmers to engage in the live-at-home type of farming almost entirely. The numerous small local markets of the cotton-mill period had not yet come into existence.

Although the population during the days of the Revolution was small, and means of transportation meagre, the spirit of freedom soared high in the breasts of the brave sons of Gaston. That spirit of freedom was of the true and lasting type, the type that never failed even amid all the hardships and sufferings the thirteen colonies went through during their seven years' fight for freedom. The victory at Kings Mountain was not a mere accident; it was due to the energy and fighting ability of the brave heroes of Gaston, Lincoln, Cleveland, and Rutherford.

The post-revolutionary days were days of slow, but gradual, development for Gaston county. Her history during all this period up to 1846, the year that Gaston was formed from Lincoln county, is connected with the history of Lincoln. Information as to the events that took place in the territory later to be known as Gaston county is sufficiently definite to give an exact summary of the most important historical events of pre-Gaston days.

### Early Settlers

Just here it might be well to give some idea of the nationalities of the settlers in this territory. The three largest racial elements to settle here, and from whom are descended the great bulk of the present-day population of Gaston, were the Scotch-Irish, the Germans, often called the Pennsylvania Dutch, from whence they came, and the Highland Scotch. The Scotch-Irish were the first to come. They settled mainly in the regions directly bordering the Catawba and nearby streams. These people, like both the Germans and Scotch Highlanders, were an industrious folk, prepared to tackle and overcome the difficulties ever in the path of the pioneer. The Indian soon proved himself an unfriendly neighbor to his newly arrived competitor, who soon showed the Red Man, through his energy and ability, that he had come to stay. Farming was the chief industry. A number of the Scotch-Irish element were well educated, some having studied at English universities, while others had received their training at Princeton, then known as the college of New Jersey.

Some of the larger families, descendants of the Scotch-Irish, are the Moores, the Armstrongs, the Brevards, and the Masons.

The German group settled west of the Catawba river about the year 1750. Like the Scotch-Irish, their predecessors by a few years, these people were thrifty and capable of development, first along agricultural lines and later along industrial lines. To-day some of the most prominent mill men of the county are descendants of these early German settlers.

The following are some of the larger families descendants of this group: Eddleman, Finger, Henkel, Hoover, Killiam, Keever, Leper, Long, Lutz, Miller, Nantz, Rhyne, Taylor, Weber, Yoder, and Zimmerman.

The third group, the Scotch-Highlanders, came to this section of the state from Fayetteville, and played a great part in the future development of the county. The Alexander, Graham, Henderson, Johnson, McLean, and Morrison families are of this group. The other groups of settlers are all smaller in number than the Scotch-Highlanders. All the different racial elements in Gaston, and they are many, have each contributed their part in making the county what it is to-day. All of them have helped to put it in the very forefront of the progressive counties of the state.

### Later History

Not until we come into the field of textile manufacture do we reach the predominating industry in the county. Gaston is truly the textile center of the state.

The first cotton mill was built in Gaston county seventy years ago. This was the Mountain Island mill, constructed in 1848, two years

after the formation of the county from Lincoln. The growth of the mill business was slow for the next twenty-five years. During all these years, from 1848 to 1872, only one additional cotton mill was built. The third was established in 1872. This slow beginning was probably due in part to the undeveloped resources of the section, as well as in part to the War Between the States, during which time all industries in the South were at a standstill. The fourth mill was built in 1876.

There arose during this period another industry that rivalled the mill business and even threatened to exterminate it. The whiskey business first made its appearance as an important industry in Gaston county during the decade from 1870 to 1880. Its growth was very rapid. Much of the farmer's corn found its way into a new channel of consumption. Whiskey soon became so plentiful and the licensed distillers so numerous, that "all you can drink for a nickle" was one of the common phrases used in advertising.

### A Moral Revolution

The experience of Gaston county has been unique. It was first the banner whiskey county of North Carolina, and now it is the banner cotton-mill county. The cotton mill completely displaced the distillery in less than thirty years or so. How did this transformation come about? This is a question that deserves special consideration. The common theory and general belief prevailing in Gaston during the later years of the nineteenth century was that the mill worker would never be content to allow his drink of whiskey to be taken from him. The belief that whiskey was essential to industrial efficiency was also prevalent. Nevertheless the transformation of Gaston from a wet to a dry county occurred during the period when the textile industry witnessed its greatest growth.

In 1880 the county was dotted with licensed distilleries. In 1885 the number had reached forty, and three years later the maximum number of forty-eight was reached. The whiskey business in that year reached its greatest development. The following years saw it gradually decline, through the repeated efforts of prohibition advocates. Full credit must be given the prohibitionists for combatting the liquor business and finally obtaining the legal provision that sounded the death knell of whiskey making in Gaston county.

Also, the advocates of prohibition deserve the credit of having indirectly, at least, contributed to the change from whiskey making to cotton manufacture, for clearly, when the former was generally discredited and later disallowed by the law, the interest centered in whiskey making had to be diverted to other fields of activity. The cotton-mill industry naturally received its proportionate share of the capital thus released. It is fair to say that some of the men who had

been engaged in distilling were men of business ability and integrity.

During the decade from 1878 to 1888, the period of greatest activity in the distillery business, the county saw a comparatively slow development in the textile industry, only four mills being erected during this ten-year period. The seven-year period from 1888 to 1895, the years that witnessed the first big decline in the number of distilleries (eight ceasing operation during this period), gives us an entirely different story to relate. During these seven years, while the distilleries were decreasing by eight in number, the total number of cotton mills constructed was twenty. The conclusion to be drawn from the above figures is that as the manufacture of whiskey declined, the interest centered in it was shifted over to the textile business, with the result as mentioned above.

In 1900 the population was 27,903, the valuation of taxable property was \$5,166,129, the cotton mills reached thirty or more in number, and the number of distilleries was reduced to sixteen.

The year 1903 saw a great victory for the prohibitionists of Gaston. The law passed in that year "prohibited the manufacture and sale of liquors in Gaston county." Wine was still allowed to be manufactured, while whiskey could only be secured by prescription of a qualified physician.

The five-year period following the passage of the first prohibition law witnessed remarkable growth in Gaston county along all lines. The population of the county increased to 36,000 in 1908, the valuation of taxable property amounted to \$10,000,000, and the sum of \$35,782 was expended for educational purposes.

The death blow to the shipment of whiskey into Gaston was dealt in 1915. By a special Act of the Legislature a law was enforced for Gaston county alone. This law forbade even the shipment of two quarts per month, the amount still allowed in the state, within the boundaries of the county. Since the year 1915, it has been illegal to ship any amount of liquor into the county.

It has been during the last twenty-five years, the period during which the liquor business has been abolished in Gaston, that the cotton-mill industry has assumed its present proportions. Gaston county has emerged from the shadow of the liquor evil into the greatest textile county in the South, without any loss of efficiency by her industrial workers. On the contrary, increased efficiency has come through prohibition.

The fact that, as interest in the manufacture of whiskey declined, the interest in the manufacture of cotton was stimulated is proved by the history of the decline of the former and the development of the latter.

By whatever means the transformation may have been accomplished, and however much credit for this transformation we may attribute



to the enemies of the liquor traffic, the transformation has, nevertheless, been made, and to-day many a prosperous cotton mill is occupying the same site formerly occupied by distilleries in various parts of the county. To-day there are more than ninety mills in Gaston county, "representing one-seventh of the textile capital of the state; operating upwards of 1,000,000 spindles, one-sixth of all the spindles in operation in the state, and one-fifteenth of the looms; consuming one-fifth of the raw material consumed annually in North Carolina, and furnishing employment to thousands of Gaston's 52,000 inhabitants."

Numerous small industrial enterprises of other sorts are in operation in all parts of the county. These are eclipsed, for the most part, by cotton manufacture.

### **Gaston County As It Is Today**

But no history of Gaston based on conditions existing in 1910 can begin to do justice to the real Gaston county of to-day. During the intervening nine years the county has made gigantic steps forward in economic, social, and civic enterprises, especially in school affairs. A state hospital for the crippled is now under construction just outside the limits of Gastonia. Gastonia received this recognition from the state through the influence of a number of its citizens interested in the welfare of the Tiny Tims of North Carolina.

The most progressive cotton-mill men are recognizing the good results obtained from satisfied workers, and are endeavoring to make their employees contented by means of better village homes, better sanitary conditions, parks and playgrounds for the young people, profit-sharing plans for the wage earners, and so on and on.

The expanse of the cotton mill since 1912 has been great. During the period of the World War there have been as many as four mills under construction at a time in Gastonia alone. Five are now in process of erection within county limits.

The rapid multiplication of cotton mills has promoted the increase of illiteracy in our county during the last few years. In the literacy of her people Gaston county does not stand toward the top of the column of counties in North Carolina. She occupies a position a little below the average. This difficulty must be solved. It is now, and has always been, a great temptation to the children in the mill sections to stop school at an early age to work in the mill, and they have very little opportunity later to go to school. This has often been the practice in spite of the law. However, under the labor and school laws combined, young children under 14 years of age ought now to have a better chance at primary and grammar school education.

The educational facilities of the county are sufficiently ample to take care of every child of school age. Since 1910, practically every town

in the county has erected a new school building, with all the modern conveniences. The towns of Belmont, Bessemer City, Cherryville, and Lowell have each constructed new school buildings in the last few years, while the city of Gastonia has constructed three—a central building, and an East and West Gastonia School. The only problem, as yet unsolved, is to get every child of school age into school. This problem will soon cease to exist, once the child labor law and the compulsory school attendance law work together effectively for the welfare of Gaston county children.

With the problem of education for the mill child settled, the prospects of a greater Gaston in the future are exceedingly bright.

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1. Soil Survey of Gaston County.—United States Department of Agriculture.
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## II

# Natural Resources

### 1. Timber

Gaston is a comparatively small county having an area of only 236,800 acres. Its topography is typical of the Piedmont region, its broad, rolling ridges being broken by steeper and more hilly regions along the streams.

Half of the present area, if cleared, would be susceptible of profitable cultivation, though more careful handling than a majority of the farms have received or are now receiving would be necessary to prevent erosion and to increase its fertility. The other half can profitably be kept under forest cover.

There are no large timber tracts in the county, the greater part of the land being held in medium and small sized farms. Only about thirty holdings exceed 500 acres in extent, and a considerable portion of these is cleared. Only six of the above tracts exceed 1,000 acres in extent and very little good timber is found on any of them.

The original forests of Gaston were the typical hardwoods and pines of the Piedmont region, though there were certain areas of stiff, red clay soils, on which no pine was found. With the exception of a few small wood-lots which the farmers have carefully preserved, no virgin timber remains in the county. What old timber remains is largely oak, most of it over-mature and stag-headed, with occasional tracts of old growth of forest short-leaf pine.

The present wooded area consists of twenty-three percent hardwood timber, containing little or no pine; sixty-three percent hardwood and pine timber; and fourteen percent old-field pine stands. The pine is absent from hardwood forests either because it has never been growing there or because it has been cut out and conditions have been unfavorable for its reseeding; this latter is probably the more likely.

Hardwood and pine forests are composed chiefly of second growth oak, hickory, and short-leaf pine, with some old culled trees of these species on the original forest land. A small proportion of the old fields is being covered with second-growth hardwoods, such as oak, hickory, poplar, and sweet gum, chiefly along the streams, in old fence jams, and other waste spaces. The pine is practically all second growth, having come up since the old trees were cut. Probably three-fourths of the merchantable timber in these wooded areas is second-growth pine. The old field pine type consists of pure or nearly pure

stands of short-leaf pine, varying in size from saplings to large poles. Probably not more than a third of these stands now contain merchantable timber. These pine stands, where large enough for timber, are valuable and add materially to the value of the farm on which they are growing.

Something over thirty small sawmills, with an average annual cut of just over 100,000 feet of lumber, are operating in Gaston county. The lumber output consists of old field pine especially in the southern part of the county. In the northern and eastern sections considerable oak is cut in addition to the pine. The lumber industry is at a low ebb in Gaston for the county has long ago passed from a lumbering stage to an agricultural and manufacturing stage.

## **2. Drainage and Power**

The natural drainage of Gaston county is excellent, with the exception of a few spots of meadow and bottom lands, and even these could be drained, reclaimed, and made productive by straightening out the natural drainage ways. The Catawba river flows southward along the eastern side of the county, and the South Fork river, entering the county near the middle of the northern boundary and flowing southeasterly, empties into the Catawba at the southeast corner of the county on the South Carolina line. Crowders, Catawba, and Long creeks are the principal streams which flow across a part of the county and empty into South Fork river, while Dutchmans and Stanley creeks flow into the Catawba river.

These rivers and creeks, with their intricate system of smaller streams, drain the county admirably.

Gaston has but recently begun to turn her streams into power for operating mills of all sorts. The streams have been largely used to run grist mills and cotton gins, and a few cotton mills have been located at favorable points. South Fork and Catawba rivers have good falls at many places, and these places will in the near future be utilized for power to operate mills and factories. At present only one of the 77 cotton-mill companies of the county operates its plant by water alone; five use water and electricity, while the rest are operated by electricity, or steam and electricity.

## **3. Minerals**

In a few localities in Gaston there are found rocks of sedimentary origin. However the more important rocks and those which cover a large area are granites, gneisses, and schists. Granite is particularly noticeable around Gastonia, Dallas, Highshoals, near Union Church, northeast of McAdenville, and between Dallas and Bessemer City. In certain parts of the northwest section around Cherryville, and also to

the west of Mountain Island, a very coarse-grained granite is prominent, together with gneisses and schists. The weathering of the coarser granites has given rise to the Durham coarse sandy loam and the Cecil coarse sandy loam, and also in part to the Cecil sandy loam. The Cecil sandy loam and also the Cecil fine sandy loam have been derived from granites and gneisses. There are small areas of talcose schists and feldite schists which give rise mainly to the Cecil loams.

East of Pasour Mountain and east of Bessemer City there is a fine-grained sandstone, which has modified to some extent the Cecil fine sandy loam and the Cecil fine sand found there. Throughout the county and especially in the eastern section the underlying rocks are gneisses and schists with some fine-grained granite, and these have weathered down to form the Cecil clay loam and the Cecil clay.

On the mountains, knolls, and peaks, quartzite is the principal rock. Its resistant action to the weathering forces is the direct cause of these various elevations. In many places are seen a green diorite and other dark-colored basic rocks, which have weathered into a dull-colored soil with an impervious subsoil called Iredell clay loam. Throughout the various formations are to be found veins of quartz, and fragments of this rock persist in the soils.

The more precious minerals are not to be found in Gaston but she has some granite of good quality.

#### 4. Soils

The soil types in Gaston county are those characteristic of the Piedmont section, which extends from northern Pennsylvania to eastern Alabama. They have been grouped mainly in the Cecil series. The Durham and Henderson are associated with the Cecil series but they occupy less than three percent of the area of the county.

Gaston is fortunate in having more than half her area composed of the two best soils in the Piedmont province. These are the Cecil sandy loam and the Cecil clay loam. All of the more important towns of the Piedmont are situated on either one or the other of these soils and their growth has been due largely to the superior adaptability of these soils to the cotton, hay and forage, and grain crops of this part of the state.

The Cecil sandy loam, in all of its varieties, is a mellow and easily tilled soil. Improved machinery can be used over a large part of it. It is one of the most extensive types in Gaston and occurs in large unbroken areas extending north and south through the central part of the county.

The surface of this type is gently rolling, becoming more rolling as the streams are approached. Its surface drainage is all that could be desired and the inter-stream areas lie beautifully for general farming purposes.

A large percentage of this type is cleared and cultivated. Cotton is the principal crop grown on it at present and with good cultivation the farmers secure yields averaging from one-half to one bale per acre. This soil is also well adapted to corn, wheat, hay, and sweet potatoes, unusually high per acre yields of all these crops having been secured where proper methods of farming are practised.

It can be easily and greatly improved and such improvement is quite lasting on account of the red clay subsoil foundation, which prevents leaching. By crop rotation, deep plowing, and turning under of leguminous crops and coarse manures this soil can be brought to an extremely high state of productivity.

The Cecil clay loam covers about 28 per cent of the area of the county. It is one of the two most valuable soil types to be found in the Piedmont province. This soil is usually called "red land," consisting typically of a red or brown loam or clay to a depth of 5 to 7 inches. The texture of this soil has a wide range; in some portions it is sandy and friable, and in others it is a tough, stiff red clay.

The Cecil clay loam when plowed under proper moisture conditions is easily handled, otherwise the soil will clod and bake. The areas which contain the largest amount of sand are more friable and the soil works up into a better tilth and is more easily handled than in the heavier areas.

The Cecil clay loam is particularly adapted to the production of corn, wheat, oats, clover, grasses, and cowpeas. It is also good for cotton, but this crop does not mature here as easily as on the Cecil sandy loam. Where good methods of cultivation are used and an early maturing variety is planted, yields of one bale to the acre are common, though the average production is below this amount. Corn yields from 12 to 86 bushels per acre on this soil, high yields being secured by proper methods of farming. Wheat fills out well, and yields of 25 bushels per acre are common; but the average is below this, about 18 bushels. Oats yield on it from 20 to 60 bushels, and cowpeas 1 to 2 tons of hay or 20 to 30 bushels of shelled peas per acre. Clover, both crimson and red, and orchard grass do well on this soil, and cabbage, turnips, apples, cherries, and pears give good returns.

### **Better Farming**

There are too many eroded or bald spots, "turned out" as they say, in the cultivated fields of Gaston. Most of these unsightly places could easily be reclaimed and made productive by applying coarse manures and sowing cowpeas and clovers for a few years. Plowing slightly deeper year by year, and a better pulverizing of the seed bed would give results in increased production. This applies particularly to the Cecil clay, Cecil clay loam, and the heavier areas of the sandy loams. These stiff lands ought to be loosened up and aerated in order

to give the plant roots a larger feeding area and to allow more rainfall to be absorbed and retained, thus insuring more moisture during dry seasons. All kinds of coarse manures—straw, leaves, or cotton bolls—when turned under on the clays are very beneficial in loosening up the soil, and result in marked improvement in the yields.

In this region where the soils and climatic conditions favor the growing of cowpeas, clovers, vetch, and rye, all the nitrogen needed for crops can be easily and cheaply secured by growing these and the farmers may thus save a large part of their fertilizer expense. If the land has been properly prepared for cowpeas the stubble when plowed under makes an excellent seed bed for wheat. One of the main reasons why the results with wheat are not more satisfactory is the poor preparation of the seed bed.

A greater diversification and a more systematic rotation of crops should be practiced in order to build up the soils and increase the yields. Cotton has for many years been the favorite crop, and not enough attention has been given to corn, grain, and hay crops. More corn, hay, wheat, and oats should be produced; more pigs and cattle kept on the farms, so that Gaston county could export instead of having to import flour, meat, hay, corn, butter, and a variety of other foods and feeds. The large number of people in the towns and factories provide excellent markets for the products of the farm, particularly for such crops as sweet potatoes, cabbage, Irish potatoes, turnips, beans, tomatoes, dairy products, and poultry. The soils of Gaston are well adapted to the cultivation of all these crops and their production in vast quantities would cause a saving to the county of about two and a third million dollars, the sum annually spent for imported food and feed supplies. Or at least this was the bill for imported food and feed in the census year. It is safe to say that the total is around five million to-day, unless the farmers of Gaston have greatly increased their food and feed crops since 1910.

### Sources of Information

Soil Survey of Gaston County.

Report of the North Carolina Commissioner of Labor, 1916.

Timber Resources of Gaston County.

North Carolina Geological and Economic Survey.

### III

## Gaston County Industries

### Cotton Manufacture

In miscellaneous manufacturing industries Gaston ranks well. But when it comes to cotton manufacture Gaston county leads, not only in North Carolina, but in the South and the nation—not in the number of spindles but in the number of mills. She has within her borders 90 cotton mills, more mills than any other county in the United States. She now leads all the counties in the South in the number of active spindles. Only three counties in the entire United States, Bristol and Middlesex counties, Massachusetts, and Providence county, Rhode Island, have more active spindles. This is due to the fact that their mills are on an average larger, but Gaston has more mills. No other county in North Carolina begins to approach Gaston as a cotton mill center.

The textile business has accumulated enormous wealth for the county for those holding stock in these concerns. Especially has this been true during the past four or five years.

Whatever the profits, they are large enough to attract all the capital needed in the business and most mills are selling stock, if it can be procured at all, away above par. New concerns have no trouble getting stock subscribed. In fact stock in new textile mills sells above par. One mill recently organized sold stock at 190 before a brick was laid.

The latest figures we have are, in part, for the year 1918, taken from the Report of the State Commissioner of Labor and Printing. During the following year several new concerns have sprung up and several new plants are now under construction. The capital stock of many plants has been increased; the raw cotton consumed, the value of the yearly output, and the yearly payroll of almost all the mills have increased. The data of the Labor Commissioner are incomplete, because the mill owners neglect or refuse to supply the information called for. However, we have at hand data supplied by the Secretary of the Gastonia Chamber of Commerce and the *Gastonia Gazette*.

The *Gastonia Gazette* has recently published a complete list of the cotton mills of the county. They did this to correct the current false impression that there are 100 mills in the county. A strict count revealed the fact that there were 84. Recently six new corporations have been organized, bringing the total up to 90. These 90 mills are owned by 77 corporations, and the list, with combined spindleage, is published at the end of this chapter.



Forty-one of these mills are found in Gastonia, which is by far the biggest textile center in the state.

The report of the Commissioner of Labor and Printing for the year 1918 gives more or less accurate information about 56 corporations which own 69 of the 90 mills in Gaston, or just about three-quarters of the total number. Twenty-one new corporations own the remaining 21 mills. Assuming that the remaining 21 mills are average mills, the reader can gain for himself a fairly accurate idea of totals for the 90 mills in operation or organized in January, 1920.

Fifty-five cotton mills in 1918 had a capital stock of \$11,044,200. In January, 1920, with 8 mills unreported the capital stock is \$25,151,126. Thus the total capital stock of the 90 mills is about \$27,500,000.

Forty-eight corporations owning two-thirds of the mills report 22,975 horsepower, an average of almost 500 horsepower for each corporation or about 35,000 horsepower for the 90 mills. Forty-eight corporations in 1918 used raw material valued at \$43,676,000 making it fair to assume that the 77 corporations now operating or organized use raw cotton valued at about 70 million dollars annually. Seventy-two of the 84 mills in 1919 used raw material valued at 55 million dollars. The estimated value of the 1918 output of these 48 corporations was \$28,321,000 or almost exactly 40 million dollars for the 84 mills in 1919. The 56 mills had 699,454 active spindles giving a total of more than a million spindles for the 90 mills now in the county. This is substantiated by figures just compiled by the Chamber of Commerce. A strict count revealed the fact that there are 1,012,696 spindles in the county.

The pay roll in 1919 with a dozen unreported, was \$4,000,000.

### **Knitting Mills**

Four knitting mills in the county in 1918 reported a total capital stock of \$72,600 with an estimated yearly output of \$400,000. These four mills had 154 knitting machines installed.

Gaston has within her limits one-sixth of all the cotton mills of the state, one-sixth of the capital stock, and one-sixth of all active spindles. She made rapid progress during the two-year period 1916-18. In 1916 she had one-seventh of the cotton mills, one-ninth of the capital stock, and one-ninth of the active spindles. Since 1918 twenty-one corporations have built or organized 21 mills.

Not only this, but Gaston people own big mills in other counties of this state and in South Carolina. This is especially true of Messrs. Cannon, Armstrong, A. K. and H. G. Winget, J. H. Separk, Lineberger and Stowe, and the late George A. Gray. Mill stock in all of the county mills is pretty well disseminated throughout Gaston county.

The mill owners are coming more and more to consider the mill workers as part of their tangible assets. They are providing good

schools and are insisting on the children's attending school. They are providing better health conditions, nurses for the mill women and children, recreation grounds, and better moral surroundings.

The mill operatives of Gaston are as well paid as any in the state. The daily wages of the highest-paid men range from \$3 to \$6.50; of the lowest-paid men from \$3 to \$1.50 per day. The highest wages paid to women range from \$1.50 to \$4 a day; and the lowest, from \$1 to \$2 per day. This was in 1918. The wages are higher in all the mills at the present time.

The 56 companies owning 69 mills in the county in 1918 employed 8,339 operatives. It is estimated that 21,000 people, the employees and their families, were dependent on the mills for support. Taking that as an average, the 90 mills in the county in 1920 will employ 11,000 persons and 27,000 people will be directly dependent on the mills for support.

Gastonia is the textile center of the state. Forty-one of the 84 mills operating are located in Gastonia, and as the average mill in Gastonia is larger than the average in the rest of the county, it is fair to assume that Gastonia has within her limits one-half the capital stock, one-half the spindles, looms and cards, uses half the raw material and turns out half of the finished products of the county. Also that half the people dependent on the mills for support, or about 14,000, live in Gastonia. This population alone makes a small city, and this fact serves to emphasize the overshadowing importance of the textile business in Gastonia.

### **Big Mill Concerns**

#### **LINEBERGER-STOWE MILLS**

"From its premier position among the pioneer cotton mill builders of Gaston county, the Lineberger-Stowe corporation at Belmont has never been displaced, and to-day it holds first rank in the county in number of spindles operated and capital stock invested. From the organization of the Chronicle Mill in 1901 with a capital stock of only \$100,000 and R. L. Stowe as chief promoter, the mill business at Belmont has grown to the magnificent total of eleven mills in Belmont alone, representing approximately 145,000 spindles and an authorized capital stock of \$7,000,000. Soon after the Chronicle Mill was built came the Imperial and Majestic; and Mr. A. C. Lineberger, one of the foremost cotton mill authorities in the South, became associated with the Belmont mills as president."

"Mr. Lineberger is president of the Rowan Mills at Salisbury, a concern with 10,000 spindles and \$600,000 capital, and is interested in the Vance Mills at Salisbury and Superior Yarn Mills at Statesville."

"The growth of the mill business in Gaston has been truly magical

and the rise of the men connected therewith has been equally as wonderful. For instance, a few days ago there were organized in the town of Belmont within the space of 36 hours three new cotton mills with a combined capital stock of \$3,800,000. Listed on the board of directors of these mills are men who, twenty years ago, were nothing more than doffers and ordinary helpers in the first mills built hereabouts. Such facts as these are illustrative and typical of the cotton mills of Belmont. All the superintendents have risen from a low place in the ranks to positions commanding annual salaries of \$4,000 and \$5,000."

"All the mills at Belmont manufacture fine yarns, the managers being among the first in this section to recognize the difference in the selling power of fine and coarse yarns."

#### THE ARMSTRONG MILLS

"The story of the growth and expansion of the Armstrong chain of cotton mills in Gastonia and surrounding counties starts with the modest beginning in 1907 of the Clara Armstrong Company with a \$200,000 capital stock and 10,000 spindles. To-day the corporation has a combined capital stock of \$4,041,000, and 119,600 active spindles. It is one of the most marvelous of the many wonderful fairy-like stories of the textile industry in Gaston county. From one mill in 1907, the industry headed by Col. C. E. Armstrong, A. K. Winget and others, has grown to 13 mills in 1920. On an average a new mill has been added every year."

"The rapid rise to unparalleled heights in cotton manufacture has been due to the wonderful insight into the future coupled with business skill and foresight possessed by few captains of industry, notably Col. C. B. Armstrong and his able lieutenant, Mr. A. K. Winget."

"The Clara Mill was built in 1907 at a cost of \$200,000. It has 10,000 spindles. Late in 1919, the Mildred was organized with 20,000 spindles. It will cost \$1,200,000. These figures give some idea of the difference in cost 13 years ago and now."

#### THE SEPARK-GRAY MILLS

"As a monument to the industry and far-seeing vision of the late Geo. A. Gray, generally recognized as the founder of the cotton mill industry in Gaston county, there are in active operation to-day, humming and spinning their song of industry and contentment, 104,082 spindles in six cotton mills, the Gray, Arrow, Parkdale, Myrtle, Arlington, and Flint. These mills represent at present an authorized capital of \$3,650,000. Contemplated changes will increase this to \$4,400,000.

"The history of the Separk-Gray interests has been one of continual growth and expansion. There has been a policy of sane, safe building

under favorable conditions, and wise investments in holdings already under construction. As illustrative of this last policy, two years ago the Arlington and Flint, two of the best mills in the South, were taken over by the Separk-Gray interests."

"One of the outstanding policies of the Separk-Gray Mills is welfare work for the employes of the mills. This work has been developed to a high state of perfection. This policy was fully vindicated during the recent epidemic of influenza when the two community workers, Misses Pickens and Potts, were on duty day and night, and succeeded in alleviating and checking the ravages of the disease. Miss Potts, the head of the work, is a graduate nurse and has had a rich and varied experience, having served with the American Expeditionary Forces as a member of the Army Nurse Corps."

#### THE LORAY MILL

"The Loray Mill itself is a good sized show. When it was built 20 years ago it was one of the largest mill buildings in the Southern states. In fact the claim was made for it then that it was the largest textile plant under one roof south of the Mason and Dixon line. It is five stories high, exclusive of the basement. Capitalized at \$1,500,000 the Loray was a giant enterprise in the textile industry. It is a much larger concern now. It has recently been converted into a yarn mill alone, manufacturing automobile tire fabrics. Within the last few months the weaving has been discontinued and the looms sold. The 57,000 spindles are being increased to 90,000. Under the old regime 550 people were employed. There are now 850 employed and when the installations of machinery are complete the number will be 1,400."

"The owners of the Loray Mills are spending, all told, somewhere around a million dollars in improvements and enlargements in and around their plant. Of this total more than half is going into new buildings, including 150 of the best constructed, most convenient and withal most attractive bungalows for their operatives that can be found in any manufacturing town in the country. These houses of four, five, and six rooms, are costing \$2,000 and up and are not lacking in modern conveniences. In the 150 homes are to be found several types of architecture. In addition to these homes for operatives, two large dormitories, one for men and the other for women, with a large cafeteria between, are being erected at a cost of considerably more than \$100,000."

"Each dormitory has 23 bed rooms besides matrons' rooms, reception rooms and halls. They are of brick veneer construction, a dark red tapestry brick being used. Each building is thoroughly equipped with baths, writing rooms, etc. In the basement of the men's dormitory

will be a bowling alley, a pool room, and probably a barber shop, to say nothing of shower baths and locker rooms."

Occupying a position midway between the two dormitories is a cafeteria which will be the most up-to-date establishment of its kind between Washington and Atlanta. The main dining room is 85 by 36 feet. The furnishings alone will cost \$15,000. This cafeteria will be run by the Waldorf System and will feed the 1,400 operatives in an hour.

Mention must be made of the Loray Community House which has been greatly enlarged and improved during the past year. This building is proving not only a great convenience for the operatives but is coming to have a great influence in their lives in the way of increased interest in educational and civic matters. Household management and sewing are taught here. The day nursery affords a splendid place for the care of infants while their mothers are in the mill or at their household duties.

Recently a laundry has been established for the use of the mill operatives. It is equipped with modern machinery and is under the care of a superintendent and 15 assistants. Though it has been running only a few weeks it is being liberally patronized by the workers.

#### THE RANKIN MILLS

"While their figures as to number of spindles and capital stock are not so pretentious as those of some of their neighbors, the Rankin chain of mills, the Osceola, Hanover, and Mountain View, owned and controlled by the W. T. Rankin interests, and the Pinkney, Rankin, and Ridge Mills, owned and controlled by R. Grady Rankin interests, is one of the most successfully operated and cleanly managed chain of mills in the county. The combined spindleage of the Osceola, Hanover, and Mountain View is 20,000 with a capital stock of \$415,000.

"Not since the Osceola was built in 1916 has it lost a working hour, night or day, and the same is true of the Hanover. The Pinkney, Rankin, and Ridge Mills represent a capital stock of \$675,000 with a spindleage of 22,500."

"Mr. W. T. Rankin originated the idea of sharing with the employes the profits from his mills. About a year ago he returned from Europe where he visited the manufacturing centers of France and Belgium. This trip impressed upon him the necessity of closer cooperation between employer and employe and he, together with several other corporations, inaugurated a profit-sharing plan. As a result there was paid out during the last six months of 1919 a sum of \$56,000 to employes representing 10 per cent of all the spindles in the county. Other corporations are following this example."

**Miscellaneous Factories**

Besides cotton and knitting mills there were 23 other miscellaneous concerns reported in Gaston in 1918. These 23 concerns had a combined capital stock of \$147,955. Leaving out of account the Coca-Cola Bottling Company of Gastonia, the other 22 concerns had plants valued at \$154,332; with an estimated yearly output of \$685,565, and a pay roll of \$374,000. These concerns are grouped and listed, together with important information concerning them, at the end of this chapter.

**COTTON MILL CORPORATIONS IN 1919**

**Seventy-seven Corporations Owning 90 Mills**

GASTONIA.		MOUNT HOLLY.	
	SPINDLES		SPINDLES
Loray Mills.....	90,000	Adrian Mfg. Co.....	13,056
Arlington Cotton Mills.....	25,352	Woodlawn Mfg. Co.....	10,080
Rex Spinning Company.....	25,000	Catawba Spinning Co.....	10,000
Priscilla Spinning Company.....	25,000	Nims Mfg. Co.....	8,100
Flint Manufacturing Co.....	23,640	Tuckaseege Mfg. Co.....	5,696
Ozark Mills.....	20,000	Globe Mills.....	5,040
Victory Yarn Mills.....	20,000	Alsace Cotton Mills.....	3,568
Mildred Cotton Mills.....	20,000		
Gray Manufacturing Co.....	18,000	DALLAS.	
Modena Cotton Mills.....	17,536	Monarch Cotton Mills Co.....	8,400
Parkdale Mills, Inc.....	15,360	Morowebb Cotton Mills Co.....	7,168
Groves Mills, Inc.....	15,000	Dorothy Mfg. Co.....	7,000
Seminole Cotton Mills.....	13,000	CHERRYVILLE.	
Gastonia Cotton Mfg. Co.....	12,500	Gaston Mfg. Co.....	12,000
Myers Mills.....	11,592	Melville Mfg. Co.....	11,000
Dunn Mfg. Co.....	10,500	Cherryville Mfg. Co.....	7,536
A. M. Smyre Mfg. Co.....	10,336	Vivian Cotton Mills.....	5,200
Avon Mills.....	10,080	Rhyne-Houser Mfg. Co.....	5,000
Myrtle Mills, Inc.....	10,240	Howell Mfg. Co.....	4,732
Osoeola Mills.....	10,000		
Pinkney Mills, Inc.....	10,000	BESSEMER CITY.	
Clara Mfg. Co.....	9,800	Osage Mfg. Co.....	16,272
Trenton Cotton Mills.....	8,448	Gambrill & Melville Mills.....	15,000
The Shuford Mills.....	8,000	Huss Mfg. Co.....	6,000
Winget Yarn Mills.....	8,000	Atlas Mfg. Co.....	4,860
Spencer Mountain Mills.....	7,072	American Cotton Mills.....	3,600
Dixon Mills.....	6,144		
Mutual Cotton Mills.....	6,500	LOWELL.	
Ridge Mills.....	6,500	Lowell Cotton Mills.....	23,500
Ranlo Mfg. Co.....	6,048	Peerless Mfg. Co.....	14,500
Ruby Mills.....	6,000		
Adams-Spencer Mills.....	6,000	STANLEY.	
Rankin Mills.....	6,000	Lola Mfg. Co.....	4,160
Hanover Thread Mills.....	5,000		
Mountain View Mills.....	5,000	MCADENVILLE.	
Armstrong Cotton Mills, Inc.....	4,500	McAden Mills.....	28,000
Piedmont Spinning Co.....	2,500		
		MAYWORTH.	
BELMONT.		Mays Mills, Inc.....	68,000
Climax Spinning Co.....	21,760		
Stowe Spinning Co.....	20,000	HIGH SHOALS.	
Aeme Mills.....	16,000	High Shoals Mfg. Co.....	18,512
National Yarn Mills.....	15,232		
Crescent Yarn Mills.....	13,056	WORTH.	
Sterling Mfg. Co.....	13,056	Harden Mfg. Co.....	8,000
Majestic Mfg. Co.....	12,768		
Imperial Yarn Mills.....	12,500	Total for Gaston County.....	1,012,690
Chronicle Mill.....	10,276		
Perfection Spinning Co.....	10,000		
Linford Mills, Inc.....	10,000		
Stowe-Puett Mills.....	10,000		

**MISCELLANEOUS FACTORIES**

FACTORY	Post Office	Capital Stock	Value of Plant	Yearly Out- put	Yearly Pay Roll
Bessemer Ginning Co.....	Bessemer City	\$ 1,955	\$ 2,166	\$.....	\$.....
Southern Cotton Oil Co.....	Gastonia	10,000	-----	229,000	220,000
Model Ginning Co.....	Cherryville	2,100	8,400	-----	-----
Flemming's Saw Mill.....	Gastonia	2,000	1,000	-----	5,000
Fox Saw Mill.....	Stanley	-----	1,000	2,000	-----
Henry Lumber Co.....	Gastonia	7,000	5,000	75,000	4,000
Morgan Lumber Co.....	Cherryville	25,000	20,000	100,000	75,000
Robinson Saw Mill.....	Mount Holly	2,000	2,000	3,000	1,500
Spencer Lumber Co.....	Gastonia	16,000	-----	-----	-----
Styers Sash and Door Shop.....	Cherryville	5,000	4,000	7,000	-----
Bludwine Bottling Co.....	Gastonia	5,000	6,706	22,000	4,500
Coca-Cola Bottling Co.*.....	Gastonia	3,000	563,109	4,869,725	693,299
Chero-Cola Bottling Co.....	Lowell	8,700	6,000	25,000	3,500
Kendrick Brick and Tile Co.....	Mount Holly	8,000	12,000	50,000	8,000
Mo-Ho Brick Co.....	Mount Holly	6,400	6,400	17,500	7,000
Beaver Dam Roller Mills.....	Lincolnton	5,000	5,000	15,000	800
Cocker Machinery Co.....	Gastonia	20,000	36,400	70,000	25,000
Gaston Iron Works.....	Gastonia	-----	12,000	12,000	6,000
Gaston Mattress Co.....	Gastonia	-----	5,000	25,000	290
C. L. Lawton (Barite).....	Bessemer City	-----	-----	-----	-----
Piedmont Metal Roofing Co.....	Dallas	6,300	6,300	12,000	500
Riverside Sand Co.....	Charlotte	4,500	5,000	12,000	5,000

\*Other establishments included.

**Sources of Information:**

1918 Report of Commissioner of Labor and Printing.  
 Gastonia Gazette.  
 Gastonia Chamber of Commerce.



## IV

# Facts About the Folks

At the close of this and subsequent chapters will be found tables indicating (1) certain fundamental facts about Gaston county, (2) the rank of the county in each particular among the hundred counties of the state, and (3) the state and national averages that serve to show how far Gaston is leading or falling behind the state and the nation. These tables are based on the latest reports of the federal Census Bureau and refer to the year 1910 unless otherwise indicated.

It ought to be borne in mind that only once in every ten years can a county take stock of itself in any thorough-going way. We know from the authorities at Washington many things about the state year by year, but nothing about the counties of any state except the annual production of cotton and recently of tobacco. And so only the 1920 census will reveal in detail just what progress the county has made during the decade just closing.

Other sources of information have been the 1906 and 1916 Censuses of Religious Bodies, the 1914 Census of Industries, the latest reports of the state departments, the University News Letter, and correspondence with local authorities in Gaston.

### Increasing Population

One of the most significant facts discovered concerning Gaston is that her rural districts have more people to the square mile than any other county in the state, the number being 84.4. Her rural districts are five times as thickly settled as two or three counties in the eastern part of the state. And she is still growing in rural population. Only two counties in the state made a greater increase in rural population during the decade from 1900 to 1910. An important fact concerning this gain is that seven-eighths of the increase consisted of whites. The negroes of the county are a decreasing ratio of the population. In 1900 they were 26 percent of the population, but in 1910 they were only 23 percent. Most of the white increase went into the mill villages and the people came mainly from the surrounding counties. Mecklenburg lost nearly 12 percent of her country population, a great part of it going over into Gaston to work in the cotton mills, of which Gaston has a greater number than any other county in the South.

The census reports show the marked effect this increasing mill

population has had on the level of general intelligence, due to lack of effective labor laws before the 1910 census was compiled. Children of almost any age were allowed to remain out of school in order to work in the mills. If the present laws are enforced, and we have no doubt they will be, the next census will show a much higher educational status.

In 1910, fourteen and a half percent of all the white people of the county 10 years old and over could neither read nor write. There were 69 counties in the state that had a smaller percent of white illiterates than Gaston. These were sheer-illiterates. How many near-illiterates there were in the county no one knows, but in Gaston just as in all other counties they far outnumber the sheer-illiterates. People who can barely read or write are in almost as bad condition as those who do not know their letters at all.

The native white illiterate voters numbered 879 and were 14 percent of the total white voters. In most counties of the state in 1910 illiterates of voting age were a larger percent of the total population than were illiterates under 21 years of age; but not so in Gaston. Fathers who can read and write have evidently allowed their children to stay out, or have kept them out, of school to work in mills or at other trades. Usually mill owners are more desirous of complying with labor laws and more interested in school and school attendance than parents in a village of mill operatives. This is a good spirit on part of mill owners, and parents who think of their children as wage earners merely should be forced to comply with mill and school laws.

Gaston also ranked below the state average in white school attendance. Only 72.7 percent of the children 6 to 14 years of age attended school in 1910, and in 1914 only 67.9 percent of those enrolled were in average attendance. Gaston should not be willing for 72 counties in the state to have a larger percent of their school children in regular attendance. As long as this condition lasts, all efforts to reduce the percent of illiteracy will be in vain.

### **A Big Church Problem**

Church as well as school authorities should be active in curing this fundamental social ill. The problem calls for religious as well as educational fire and fervor. Most of the illiterates above 20 years of age, here as elsewhere in North Carolina, are beyond the reach of day schools. If they are ever to rise out of sheer illiteracy they must be taught in night schools that represent the efforts of religious workers.

Churches have been slow to recognize this important home mission task. They could be, if willing and anxious, a mighty force in reducing illiteracy in Gaston as well as in the South generally, where nearly two-thirds of all the white illiterates of the United States are massed.

The cure of adult illiteracy is the fundamental home mission task in North Carolina and the South. It is more a church problem than a civic or secular problem. But if the church attempts to solve this problem, she must approach it with exceeding care. These people do not like to be reminded of their shortcomings, and to make them realize the need of education requires the greatest skill on the part of workers.

It is fundamentally a religious problem because illiterates tend to stay away from churches. Fifty-four percent of illiterates and sheer illiterates in three southern communities have been found to be habitually absent from church services, and this ratio is probably true of all our communities. They are ashamed to go because, as they commonly say, they cannot pick up a song book and sing with the rest, and rather than display their ignorance they prefer to stay at home.

The church must either destroy illiteracy or illiteracy will destroy the country church in the South.

### **Church Membership**

That illiteracy is directly related to church membership is borne out by the fact that 12,135 people over 10 years of age in Gaston in 1906 belonged to no church whatever. The non-church members were 45 percent of the population over 10 years of age, and 61 counties in the state made a better showing. This is further evidence that the fundamental home mission problem is the cure of illiteracy. In 1916 the non-church members numbered 12,938 and were 42 percent of the population over 10 years of age. Church membership ratios are low, (1) in sparsely settled areas afflicted by social isolation, (2) in areas of excessive illiteracy and near-illiteracy, (3) in areas of excessive farm tenancy, and (4) in trade and factory centers where home ownership ratios are low.

### **Pauperism**

Gaston leads the state in the number of cotton mills and in the ratio of mill hands to total population. Massachusetts holds the same pre-eminence among the New England states; with this difference—the almshouse paupers in Massachusetts number 447 per hundred thousand population, while in Gaston county the rate is only 84. Which is to say pauperism in Massachusetts is relatively more than five times the pauperism in Gaston county, North Carolina.

After all is said, it is true that the wages of mill hands in Gaston are better than in Massachusetts; the cost of living is less, mill village conditions are wholesomer; the operatives are better housed, clothed, and nourished; they are a superior type of civilization; they are more

law-abiding and more self-respecting; they have a better chance to save money out of their wages, and they have money enough laid up against a rainy day to invest liberally in the capital stock of new cotton mills that are now being organized. Conditions can be still better in Gaston, but from any angle of consideration they are better even now than in Lawrence or Lowell, Massachusetts.

### Facts About the Folks

The following facts are based on the 1910 census except where indicated. Rank indicates the number of counties making a better showing.

In the census year, Gaston with 236,800 acres of land was 71st in size in North Carolina; 9th in population with 37,063 inhabitants; and 1st in density of rural population with 84.4 people to the square mile. Gaston ranked 3rd in rural population increase during the ten-year period 1900-09. The increase was 34.4 percent.

The whites in Gaston in 1910 outnumbered the negroes more than three to one. The negroes are a decreasing ratio of population, the ten-year decrease being 3.1 percent.

Further social facts are indicated in the following table:

70th in Native white illiterates 10 years old and over, percent .....	14.5
State average 12.3 percent; U. S. average 4.2 percent.	
46th in Native white illiterate voters, 879 in number, percent .....	14
State average 14 percent; U. S. average 4.2 percent.	
73rd in White school attendance, 6 to 14 years of age, percent .....	72.7
White children of these ages not in school in Gaston in 1910 numbered 1,682.	
69th in Negro school attendance, 6 to 14 years of age, percent .....	60.9
Negro children of these ages not in school, 849.	
54th in Marriage rate per 1,000 population 15 years old and over in 1914.....	10
State average, 10.1; Pasquotank, 23.6.	
Marriages in Gaston, 370.	
22nd in Birth rate per 1,000 of population in 1910.....	34.8
Average for the United States 26.6 in 1913.	
Average for Gaston was 33.4 in 1917. Average for North Carolina 31.8 in 1917.	

*Gaston County: Economic and Social*

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80th in Death rate per 1,000 population, 1914.....	13.4
Average for United States 13.5 in 1915.	
Average for Gaston was 15.2 in 1917. Average for North Carolina 14.1 in 1917; died of tuberculosis 47.	
54th in Church membership, percent, 1916.....	42
12,938 people 10 years of age and older, outside the church, or 42 percent of the population of these ages. State average of church membership, 45 percent.	
49th in Homicides, average annual rate per 100,000 inhabitants, 1910-14 .....	88
Robeson last with 408; three counties, Hyde, Pamlico, and Randolph had no homicides in 1910-14. State average, 95; United States average, 72.	
43rd in Blind inmates in North Carolina State School, in 1914, ratio per 100,000.....	16
State average, 20.	
Total number of inmates from Gaston county, 6.	
21st in Suicides in 1913, number.....	1
Twenty counties had more than 1. Two suicides in Gaston in 1917.	
36th in Outside paupers in 1914, rate per 100,000 inhabitants..	189
State average, 234.	
Total number of outside paupers, 70.	
36th in Paupers in almshouse, 1910 census, rate per 100,000 population .....	84
State average, 96; United States average, 190; Mass., 447.	
Total number of almshouse paupers, 31.	
44th in Divorces, rate per 100,000 population in 1916.....	25.6
State average 31. Transylvania leads with a rate of 119.2 divorces per 100,000 population.	

## Facts About Wealth and Taxation

### Wealth

Gaston ranks well above the state average in most particulars of wealth and taxation, as can be seen in the table that closes this chapter.

Gastonia and Gaston county have been advertised far and near by the Chamber of Commerce, a very active body that is now expanding into county-wide membership and purposes.

### Farm Prosperity

We find that Gaston county in the census year had farm property valued at more than eight and a half million dollars, and that only fifteen counties in the state had a larger total wealth in farm properties. It is a highly creditable total for a county that ranked only 71st in size. The popular impression is that Gaston is pre-eminently a manufacturing county. She is, but she is also one of the fifteen most important agricultural counties in the state. Her people know that farm prosperity is the basis of all prosperity, and however much they increase in manufacture they cling to the fundamental idea that their ultimate prosperity rests on agriculture.

As proof of this, she is one of the few counties in the state that has been willing to tax herself in order to employ a farm demonstration agent and also a farm life school specialist. Several counties have either one or the other, but rarely have they been willing to afford both. The bankers, merchants, and mill owners know that their business success and development are directly dependent upon a well developed agriculture in the surrounding farm regions. It is these capitalists in particular that have been working to get the county to employ these two important agencies in agricultural regeneration.

### Property Increases

During the census period from 1900 to 1910, the increase in value of farm properties was 165 percent and only 16 counties made greater gains in this particular. This is further evidence that Gaston does not intend to develop a one-sided prosperity.

Her increase in taxable property during the ten-year period from 1903 to 1913 was 85 percent and only thirty counties made a better

showing. The total taxable wealth, property actually listed on the tax books in 1913, amounted to \$14,015,566 and only 11 counties had more. The tax commission report for the year 1918 shows that she had \$21,068,775 worth of property listed on the tax books, and only 7 counties showed a larger total. Her gain for the five-year period was a little over 7 million dollars, or considerably more than one and a third million dollars each year. This represents a per capita increase in taxable property amounting to \$33 per year.

### Country Wealth

When it comes to per capita country wealth in 1910, Gaston does not rank so well, but many of her mill population were counted as country population because they were living in towns and villages of less than 2,500 inhabitants. The per capita wealth on this basis was only \$275, while the state average was \$322 and the average for Alleghany was \$560. But even Alleghany, our richest farm county, is poor when compared with the average for the United States which was \$994, and with the average for Iowa which was \$3386 per country inhabitant. Counting the farm population alone the per capita country wealth of Gaston in 1910 was only \$410.

Think of it! The average countryman in Gaston county was worth \$410 dollars in 1910 while the average countryman in Iowa the same year was worth \$3386 or more than 8 times as much. The conditions that cause this vast difference in per capita country wealth will be discussed in the chapter on the Local Market Problem.

### Tenancy

One of the fundamental economic and social disabilities of Gaston is the excess of tenant farmers. She is below the state average ratio of white and colored farm owners. In 1910 only 23 out of every 100 negro farmers in Gaston owned the farms they cultivated. With whites the conditions were better. Sixty out of every 100 white farmers owned the farms they cultivated. In North Carolina 66 percent of the white farmers own their farms. Gaston should set about making it possible for a thrifty, industrious tenant to rise into ownership. Agricultural prosperity can never attain a maximum until the farm populations are a home-owning, home-loving, home-defending people. Tenancy was the only solution of the land and labor problem directly following the Civil War, but it has lingered on to become the curse of the South wherever the system has rooted itself firmly. The evils arising from tenancy farming are obvious to all, and legislation should assist in making tenancy a rapidly disappearing social obstacle in North Carolina and the South.

### **Farm Mortgages**

In 1910 16 percent of all white farms and 28 percent of all negro farms were covered by mortgage. These figures are below the state average for white farmers and above for negro farmers. Conditions sometimes make it absolutely necessary for a farmer to mortgage his property, or a mortgage may mean capital borrowed for productive purposes—more land and better buildings and equipments. But too often a farm owner is willing to cover his holdings with paper in order to indulge in some of the luxuries of life. In recent years many farmers have been mortgaging their farms in order to buy automobiles. I know one small automobile salesman who holds mortgages on more than \$200,000 worth of farm property in a single county in this state. The family which rides in a motor car bought with a farm mortgage is fast riding out of farm ownership into farm tenancy. The tendency to mortgage farms in order to indulge in luxuries is less pronounced in Gaston than in a score or more other counties in North Carolina. The state over, our investment in motor cars is at present 5 times greater than the value of our school property of every sort.

### **Motor Cars and Roads**

Only 33 counties had more automobiles in 1918 than Gaston. She had a total of 1398 cars, or nearly one for every 6 families in the county. These cars were valued at \$850,000 while the total value of public school property, city, town, and country in 1918, was only \$352,000; which was less than half of the value of her automobiles. In January of this year, 1920, Gaston had 2,162 automobiles worth nearly 2 million dollars, placing an average value of \$900 on each machine.

Gaston ranked well in the percent of improved roads. Only nineteen counties made a better showing. One mile of road out of every three in the county in 1914 was either graded or surfaced. There were 155 miles of improved roads, 140 of which were surfaced. In the state at that time, only one mile out of every five was improved.

Since 1914 much work has been done on Gaston roads. In January, 1920, she had 250 miles of sand-clay road, 76 miles of macadam, and 16 miles of asphalt. This means that, for a county the size of Gaston, she has a remarkable mileage of good roads. The people of Gaston recognize the economic and social necessity of good roads and realize that every dollar invested in good roads is a dollar well invested.

### **Taxation**

Gaston may be proud of the fact that she is one of the 79 counties that pay more money into the state treasury than is received back



in pensions and school money. Indeed there were only 18 counties in the state in 1914 that paid in a greater excess. Her clean contribution to state support on this basis was \$20,240. Eleven counties, 10 of them in the northwestern part of the state, receive from the state treasury more than the taxes they paid in.

But look what has happened in Gaston since 1914! In 1918 the rich county of Gaston had fallen from 18th place to 93d place and had become a burden on the state treasury to the amount of \$6,334. That is, she drew out of the state treasury in pensions and school funds \$6,334 more than she paid into the treasury. The fact that the rich county of Gaston is a dependent child of the state passes our understanding. It is a matter well worth the consideration of everyone in Gaston county.

The tax rate, state and county, on the \$100 in 1914 in Gaston county was \$1.03. The combined rate was greater in 44 counties. In 1917 it was \$1.10, and only 32 counties were willing to bear a heavier burden. In almost every instance the heavier rates were made necessary because their lands and other properties were listed at a good deal less than their actual value. Looked at in this light, Gaston does not lag so far behind. A low rate on property listed at its true value is preferable to a high rate on property listed at minimum values, as in most counties of the state. This is the philosophy embodied in the recent Revaluation Act.

Willingness to support schools is shown by the material increase in local school tax rates on the \$1000 worth of assessed values. A progressive county like Gaston should not be willing for 61 counties in the state to have higher local school tax rates. There are too few local tax districts in Gaston. Not even in Gaston do the teachers receive the salaries they deserve and the only way to pay them properly for the services they render is to increase the local school tax rates. The rate in Gaston was only \$4.80 on the \$1000 assessed valuation in 1913-14. Pamlico, a rather poor county, led the state with a local school tax rate of \$8.98. The local school tax rate in Gaston, county and local, was \$5.04 on the \$1000 of taxables in 1918.

In state income taxes paid in 1917, Gaston ranked 8th among the counties of the state. Nine counties paid no state income tax in 1917. The total income taxes paid by prosperous people in Gaston in 1917 were \$2417. Only nine counties paid more income taxes in 1915. Professional taxes paid by 62 lawyers, doctors, dentists, photographers, and the like in the county amounted to \$310 in 1914; in 1917, 83 professional men paid privilege taxes amounting to \$418.

The wealthy mill owners of Gaston paid federal taxes on incomes and excess profits amounting to 5 million dollars in 1919. A princely sum.

**Banks**

In 1914 Gaston had 10 banks, or one for every 4004 people, ranking 23rd in this respect. These banks had a total capital in 1915 of \$325,500, and resources amounting to \$2,689,000. The total loans and discounts in Gaston for 1915 amounted to \$1,888,519; the three national banks loaned and discounted \$1,486,028 of this amount.

In 1915 the per capita bank capital of Gaston was \$7.12 and thirty-one counties made a better showing; the per capita bank resources were \$64.20 and only 19 counties had more; while the per capita bank loans and discounts amounted to \$43.70 and only eight counties did a larger per capita business in loans and discounts on the capital invested. Manifestly at this time Gaston like Forsyth was deficient in local banking facilities, in capital, resources, loans and discounts. There is room in both counties for immense expansion in the banking facilities and business.

In 1917 the banks of Gaston had a combined bank stock amounting to \$312,155 and only 18 counties had more. These were all counties with large towns with big trade and manufacturing interests.

**War Thrift**

Gaston responded nobly to the appeals of our government during the World War. She invested \$80 per inhabitant in Liberty Bonds and War Savings Stamps, making a total investment of \$3,729,358. Her thrifty citizens had laid up against a rainy day bank account savings in 1918 amounting to \$1,006,659, and only 12 counties had larger totals. These bank account savings averaged \$22 per inhabitant, counting men, women and children of both races.

**Facts About Wealth and Taxation**

16th in Total farm wealth, 1910 census.....	\$8,628,686
17th in Farm wealth increase, 1900 to 1910, percent.....	165
State average increase, 130.5 percent.	
31st in Increase in value of domestic animals, 1900-10, per- cent .....	118
State average increase, 109 percent; Robeson, 200 percent.	
8th in Total taxable property in 1917.....	\$21,068,775
Mecklenburg leads with \$38,972,780.	
31st in Increase in taxable property, 1903-13, percent.....	85
State increase, 81 percent. State average in- crease, whites, 69 percent; negroes, 137 percent. Ten-year increase in Gaston, 1907-17, was 95 percent. Land values increased in Gaston, 1900-10, 188 percent.	

47th in Per capita country wealth, 1910.....	\$275
Alleghany, \$560; State, \$322; U. S., \$994; Iowa, \$3386. In 1913 in Gaston the per capita taxable wealth was \$394. White per capita taxable wealth in 1910 was \$321, and negro per capita taxable wealth was \$20.70.	
79th in Negro farm owners, percent of all negro farmers..	23
State average 33 percent. Negro farm owners in Gaston numbered 178. White farm owners in Gaston are 60 percent of all white farmers; in North Carolina 66 percent.	
33rd in Tax rate on the \$100, state and county in 1917....	\$1.10
Forty-three counties had higher tax rates in 1914, and 32 had higher rates in 1917.	
62nd in Local taxation for schools, rate per \$1000 assessed value, 1913-14.....	\$4.80
Pamlico led with \$8.98.	
7th in Tax value of farm lands compared with census value, percent .....	73
State average, 39 percent.	
8th in State income taxes paid, 1917.....	\$2417
Thirty-two counties paid no state income tax in 1914, and 9 counties paid none in 1917. None in prosperous counties like Pitt, Watauga, Person and Caswell!	
10th in Professional taxes paid, 1917.....	\$418
Eighty-three lawyers, doctors, photographers, dentists, and the like in Gaston.	
43rd in White farm mortgages, 1910, percent.....	16
State average for whites, 17 percent.	
46th in Negro farm mortgages, 1910, percent.....	28
State average for negroes, 26 percent.	
State average for both races, 18.5 percent.	
20th in Improved roads in 1914, percent.....	31
Miles of improved roads, 155. Miles of surfaced roads, 140. In February, 1920, Gaston has 250 miles of sand-clay, 76 miles of macadam, and 16 miles of asphalt roads.	
34th in Automobiles, June 30, 1918, number.....	1398
This is an average of nearly one for every 6 families.	
Amount invested in motor cars \$850,000. In January, 1920, they numbered 2162 and were worth almost 2 million dollars.	
Amount invested in public school property in 1918 was only \$352,000.	

19th in Taxes paid into the state treasury in excess of pensions and school money received, in 1914.....	\$20,240
Eleven counties in the state were dependent; that is they received back from the state treasury more money than they paid in. These eleven counties, all in the western part of the state, are Ashe, Jackson, Clay, Alexander, Yancey, Alleghany, Wilkes, Mitchell, Burke, Yadkin, and Watauga. Mecklenburg paid into the state treasury \$88,241 more than it received back in pensions and school funds.	
37th in Confederate pensioners, 1915, rate per 10,000 of population .....	73
Number of pensioners in the county, 293. Clay ranks first with a rate of 166 per 10,000 of population. Perquimans last with 16 per 10,000 of population. State average, 62.	
23rd in Banks, 1914, ten in number, one bank for the following number of people.....	4,004
State average, one bank for every 4,800 people. United States average, one bank for every 3,700 people. Camden, Currituck, and Graham had no banks in 1914.	
32nd in Per capita bank capital, 1915.....	\$7.12
Ten banks with total capital of \$330,000. State per capita \$4.80; New Hanover leads with \$40.65.	
20th in Per capita bank resources, 1915.....	\$64.20
Total resources \$2,689,000. State per capita \$62.25. New Hanover leads with \$432 per capita.	
19th in Per capita bank loans and discounts, 1915.....	\$43.70
Total bank loans and discounts \$1,888,519. State per capita \$45.00.	
28th in War thrift per capita, 1918.....	\$80.00
State average \$90. Total investments in Liberty and Victory Bonds and War Savings Stamps in Gaston, \$3,729,358.	
27th in Bank account savings, per capita, 1918.....	\$22.00
Total bank account savings in Gaston in 1918 were \$1,006,659. The total was larger in only 12 counties.	

## VI

# White Rural Schools

### Nine-Year Gains, 1908-09 to 1917-18

Progress in the rural schools of Gaston county during the nine years from 1908-09 to 1917-18 has been highly creditable in many respects. We have no adequate figures later than 1917-18. (Repeated requests for detailed information for the year 1918-19 have been made but these have met with failure so far.) The only notable decreases that meant actual loss were in the percent of the school population attending school, in teachers with 4 years' experience, and in teachers having college diplomas. Either the highly educated teachers and teachers with four years or more of experience went to the town schools or they moved out of the county entirely. Gains have been made in these two particulars since 1915-16, for in that school year no rural school teacher in the county had four years of experience or a college diploma. The decrease in schools with home-made desks was 100 percent, every schoolhouse in 1918 being furnished with patent desks. The gains in this nine-year period run all the way from a decrease of 100 percent in schools with home-made desks to an increase of 280 percent in the number of local tax districts. The most significant and important gains were in the rural school fund, 189 percent; the increase in funds raised by local tax, 111 percent; the increase in the fund spent for teaching and supervision, 197 percent; the increase in the amount spent for administration, 225 percent; the increase in the value of rural school property, 218 percent; and in average annual salaries paid rural white teachers, 99 percent. The last particular represents no relative gain since living costs had increased as fast as teachers' salaries up to 1917-18, and have far outstripped the increase in salaries since 1917-18.

### Consolidation of Schools

One of the most important gains any county in this state can make is in the number of two- or three-teacher schools. In practically every county in North Carolina we have too many one-teacher schools. So it was in Gaston in 1908-09, so it is to-day. But she has made important gains. During the nine-year period there was an increase of two in the number of districts and of nine in the number of school-houses. The districts and houses should be reduced. They should be combined and consolidated and the county re-districted.

There was an increase of 131 percent in the number of rural schools having two or more teachers and an increase of 30.9 percent in the number of such schools. Still 44.8 percent of the rural white schools have only one teacher and must necessarily be one-horse, microscopic schools. I say microscopic because some of them in this state are so small that it would require a microscope to find them. A few of them in North Carolina the county superintendents have never seen. The increase in two- or more-teacher schools shows that the people are giving up the individual benefits derived from schools at their front gates for the social benefits of larger and better schools not so favorably situated with respect to each family. Good roads and modern school trucks facilitate community transportation of school children thus enabling schools to consolidate. Instead of increasing the number of schoolhouses from 61 to 70 as she did during the nine-year period, she could better have reduced the number. Gaston is too small and too densely populated to have so many one-teacher schools. Being the most densely populated county in the state she could more easily consolidate her schools than many of the eastern and mountain counties that made more progress in this essential particular during the nine years under consideration.

#### **What It Means**

The consolidated school means a strong school with two or more teachers. It means the combination of two or more weak, one-teacher schools into one strong school centrally located. Such a union would make it possible to have better schools, more and better teachers with better salaries, larger classes, better classification and better instruction. Besides it means the enthusiasm of numbers. The little one-room school is likely to be a lifeless, listless school.

A thorough survey of the county should be made and choice school sites mapped to the end that future buildings shall be for permanence on principles of consolidation.

#### **Rural School Fund**

Gaston has made considerable progress in her rural school fund. During the nine-year period the school fund increased from \$37,217 to \$107,505, an increase of 189 percent. The totals raised by local taxes and the general county property tax for 1908-09 and 1917-18 were \$30,420 and \$65,095, an increase of 111 percent.

These are very material gains and show increasing willingness on the part of the taxpayers to bear heavier burdens for the support of better schools. This is expressed by their willingness to levy local taxes for school support. However, this willingness is not found in 48 of the rural districts. Only 19 of the 67 rural districts levy a

local school tax. The districts must provide more local money if they wish better educational advantages for their children.

### **Better Salaries**

A very significant gain was in the average annual salaries paid rural white teachers. In 1908-09 the average of such salaries was only \$203.76 while in 1917-18 it was \$406.30, or an increase of 99 percent in nine years. In 1915-16 only ten counties paid their rural white teachers more than Gaston. Teachers are human and they will go where salaries are largest and naturally so. They are even leaving the teaching profession altogether because even though they love the calling they find it impossible to make ends meet on the small pittance allowed them. They are becoming carpenters, elevator girls in cities, ship workers, clerks, etc. They are seeking jobs that require less intelligence and training but offer larger compensation. Schools are closed by the thousands in the South to-day because no one can be found who will teach for the pay offered. More than a third of the schools in six southern states are now closed for this reason. And the youth of the land are going uninstructed. The nation is losing by thousands its most valuable asset, the teachers. One thousand have resigned during the last five months in New York City alone.

Gaston will be wise to pay her teachers more than adjoining counties, for a county plays a losing game when it serves as a training ground for teachers who leave for other counties for better pay. As long as Gaston pays her teachers more than her neighbors she will have better schools and better teachers.

### **Better Teachers Needed**

Gaston took a great slump in the years between 1908-09 and 1917-18 in the number of rural teachers with college diploma and four years of experience. Of the 160 rural white teachers in 1917-18, only 21 had four years of experience and they were 52.5 percent fewer than such teachers in 1908-09. Only 25 of the 160 teachers had college diplomas and they were 32.4 percent fewer than in 1908-09. Then what becomes of the teachers? To ask the question is to answer it. Just this, they leave the county or quit teaching after practical proof that they cannot earn a decent living. Is \$406 a year just pay for a teacher's work? Can he or she live on it? That was the average pay in 1917-18. It was above the average for the state. In 1914-15 Gaston had 75 rural white teachers with four years of experience and 47 with college diplomas. To-day a majority of these are following more remunerative pursuits and their places have been taken by inexperienced teachers with a minimum of preparation. The penalty of course falls on the children.

### **Rural School Property**

The value of rural school property increased during these nine years from \$49,269 to \$169,850, or 218 percent. The three new rural houses built in 1917-18 cost only \$4,000, so the total value of white rural school property is worth very little more than \$175,000 at the present time. Superintendent Hall estimates that in February, 1920, the total value of town and county school property is \$500,000. The school properties in Gastonia and Bessemer City constitute the big bulk of this total value. Seventeen years ago the value of all public school property in the county was only \$13,000. Which is to say, the value of all school property increased in a thirty-nine fold ratio during this period. A remarkable instance of progress.

The total value of all school property is likely to be doubled during this year. The Chamber of Commerce states that plans are under way for constructing a \$500,000 modern high school building in Gastonia. It sounds fabulous to us who have been accustomed to think in small terms, but it can easily become a reality in the remarkably rich city of Gastonia. But while Gastonia is building palatial schools she and other rich Gaston cities should be considering the less fortunate country regions with inadequate school facilities. It is the country schools in Gaston and in nearly every other county that need to be more liberally supported. Gaston should initiate the county-unit system of school support as New Hanover has done in this state and as every county in Florida has done. It means that every taxpayer's dollar in the county goes to help support every school in the county—the schools in the poor country regions as well as the schools in the rich city wards.

### **Modern Advantages**

Seventeen years ago Gaston had no public high schools. To-day there is a public high school in each of the six townships to which all children of rural schools who have passed the 7th grade can go for eight months in the year. These schools have eleven grades so that graduates go directly to college or university. There is a domestic science teacher in each of these schools.

### **Enrollment and Attendance**

The compulsory school law does not seem to have had a hearty support in Gaston. The rural school population has increased 18.8 percent during the nine-year period and enrollment increased 19.3 percent. But the percent of enrollment increased only four-tenths of 1 percent, while there was an actual decrease of 2.1 percent in the percent of school population attending school. Under compulsory



school attendance laws a smaller percent were attending school in 1917-18 than nine years earlier. Poor attendance and enrollment are not confined to rural schools. In 1918-19 only 59.8 percent of all children of school age in the county were so much as enrolled on the school registers, and only 42.7 percent of the total school population were in average daily attendance. More than half the school children of Gaston were out of school in 1918-19. However, this is partially due to the influenza epidemic of last year. In 1917-18 only 39 percent of the rural white school children were in average daily attendance and there was no epidemic that year. The truth of the matter is that the school attendance in Gaston is hardly creditable.

In 1910 seventy-two counties ranked ahead of Gaston in white school attendance 6 to 14 years of age. Sixty-eight counties ranked ahead of Gaston in school attendance on enrollment in 1915-16. This is a deplorable state of affairs. Too many children of school age are working in mills, or staying at home. This condition is not existing because schools have not been provided. The taxpayers have been liberal. Gaston ranks seventh in investment in rural school property; 12th in investment in rural school property per capita; 29th in amount spent upon rural buildings and supplies; and 11th in salaries paid white teachers. Why should she trail the counties of the state in enrollment and attendance?

### **Rural School Equipment**

Gaston has made remarkable improvement in the equipment of her rural schoolhouses. In 1908-09, thirty of the 61 rural white schools were provided with patent desks. Now every one of the 70 country schools is provided with up-to-date patent desks. She has provided libraries in many schools. Nearly all the schools have basketball and tennis courts. The high schools are provided with domestic science departments and the children are learning to live better in their homes.

### **Constructive Suggestions**

Gaston needs first to introduce the county-unit plan of school support. Every taxpayer's dollar in the county should go toward the support of every school in the county, town and country.

Next, she needs to reduce greatly the number of school districts by consolidation. Too much is written and said about consolidation and not enough is done. No county in North Carolina is big enough to have within her borders sixty-seven school districts and sixty-seven rural white schools. Rural schools in this state as elsewhere in the South are a mired wheel. Their salvation lies in consolidation. Twenty rural school districts with twenty good, wide-awake schools would spell progress in Gaston. Each school should have a dormitory for its teachers, and motor transportation for distant children.

Teachers' salaries must be increased or the profession will fail to hold the best teachers in Gaston. Their places will be filled by incompetent and inexperienced teachers, or not filled at all as is now the case all over the land.

School support has been liberal in the past. It must be more liberal in the future or Gaston will fail to derive the maximum benefits that come from an educated citizenship.

And Gaston is abundantly able to invest in public school education. On January 1, 1920, she had two million dollars invested in motor cars, which was nearly six times the total she had invested in public school property. Comment is unnecessary.

**GAINS IN WHITE RURAL SCHOOLS**  
**From 1908-9 to 1917-18**

	1908-09	1917-18	Per Cent Increase
Total school fund.....	\$37,217.00	\$107,505.00	189
Raised by local tax.....	30,420.00	65,095.00	111
Spent for teaching and supervision.....	23,868.00	70,926.00	197
Spent on buildings and supplies.....	9,070.00	30,956.00	241
Spent for administration.....	1,104.00	3,585.00	225
Total school property.....	49,226.00	169,850.00	218
Total school population.....	9,872.00	11,721.00	18.8
Total school enrollment.....	6,627.00	7,906.00	19.3
Average daily attendance.....	4,071.00	4,635.00	13.8
Percent enrolled.....	67.1	67.5	.4
Percent of daily attendance.....	41.1	39	2.1*
Average annual salaries, white.....	\$ 203.76	\$ 406.30	99
Rural white schools.....	66	67	1.5
With two or more teachers.....	16	37	131
Per cent with two or more teachers.....	24.3	55.2	30.9
Total rural white teachers.....	100	160	60
With normal training.....	27	-----	-----
With 4 years experience.....	40	21	47.5*
Having college diplomas.....	37	25	32.4*
School houses.....	61	70	14.8
With patent desks.....	30	70	133
Home made desks.....	31	0	100*
New school houses.....	4	3	25*
Cost of new houses.....	\$ 2,500.00	\$ 4,000.00	60
Total school districts.....	65	67	3.2
Local tax districts.....	5	19	280
Average term in days, white.....	115	134	16.5

Note:--\*means decrease.

**The Rank of Gaston County Schools**

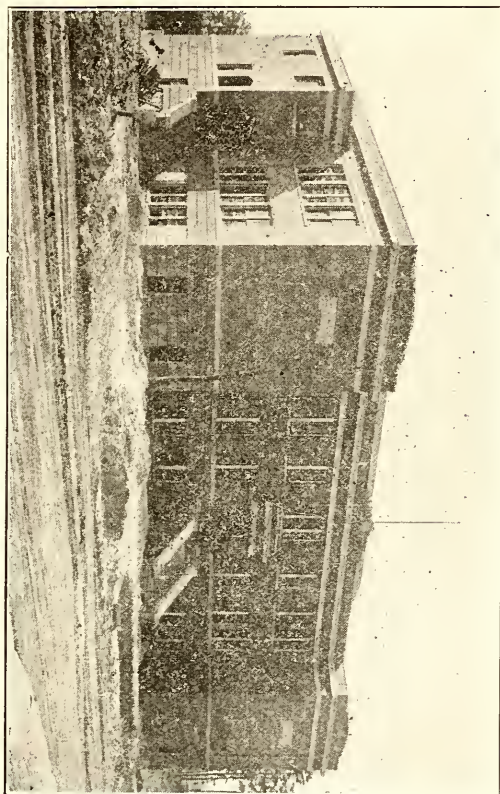
16th in Total farm wealth, 1910.....	\$8,628,686
7th in Investment in rural school property, 1918.....	\$182,350
Wake leads with an investment of \$333,303 in rural school property. Gaston ranked 47th in per capita country wealth, but 7th in investment in rural school property.	
29th in Amount spent upon rural buildings and supplies, 1917-18 .....	\$7,349
Euncombe leads with \$56,632.	
11th in Annual salaries paid white teachers, 1916.....	\$389.49
State average, \$264.36. New Hanover leads with \$531.69. In 1918, of the 160 rural white teachers in Gaston only 25 had college diplomas and 21 4 years' experience. The average salary paid all white teachers in 1918 was \$443.30; rural white teachers \$406.34.	

74th in Salaries paid negro rural teachers, average in 1916.	\$110
In 1917-18 the average salary was only \$96.	
59th in Number of local tax districts, 1916, percent.....	21.7
19 local tax districts in 1917-18. 48 white rural school districts have no local tax.	
22nd in Total revenue from local district taxes, 1918.....	\$12,538
Received from state appropriation and equalizing fund, \$19,753, and from high school and farm life school fund, \$4,500.	
59th in School expenditures per \$1,000 worth of property in 1914 .....	\$7.37
McDowell first with \$20.85 per \$1,000 worth of property. State average \$8.03. In 1918 it was \$10.04 on the \$1,000 in Gaston.	
12th in Investment in white school property, per capita, 1916 .....	\$6.24
Per capita investment in school property in 1919 was \$10.70. Per capita investment in automobiles in 1919 was \$42.80.	
73rd in White school attendance, 6 to 14 years of age, 1910 census, percent .....	72.7
24th in Per capita expenditures on rural school buildings and supplies, 1913-14 .....	\$0.45
69th in School attendance on enrollment, 1916, percent.....	64.4
Henderson leads with 86.2. State average, 68.8.	
44th in Rural white schools with two or more teachers, 1916, percent .....	46
In 1918, 37 of the 67 rural white schools had two or more teachers.	
54th in Average expenditures per high school pupil enrolled, 1916 .....	\$23.10
It is a decrease of \$6.71 over the previous year. Harnett leads with \$65.13 per high school pupil enrolled. Halifax is lowest with \$8.37. State average, \$25.92.	

**Sources of Information:**

Reports of State Superintendent of Public Instruction.

Department of Rural Social Science Files, University of N. C.



SCHOOL THAT LORAY CHILDREN ATTEND

## VII

# Farm Conditions and Practices

### Too Much Idle Land

Although Gaston had more country people per square mile than any other county in the state in 1910, only 42.8 percent of her total area was under cultivation. The average for the state was only 29 percent. Second-growth wood lots, broom-sedge, and the like occupied 57.2 percent of the total area. There were 135,744 acres of land not under cultivation while only 101,696 acres were under the plow. Calculated in census values Gaston has one and a third million dollars of dead farm capital buried in idle farm land; or five and a half million dollars in current market values.

Gaston does not have such vast areas of idle land as many other counties, but she has enough to challenge considerable attention. If she were to reserve 50,000 acres for wood lot uses and allow 75 acres to each family, there is room in Gaston for 1,140 new farm families. Most of the idle land is wooded or worn out acres on farms larger than the owner wishes or is able to cultivate. Some of this land is too hilly to plow conveniently and is lying idle awaiting the awakening of the people to the economic advantages of live-stock farming. Some of the hills are already sodded with good grasses and are spotted with improved cattle. These hills are fertile for the most part and produce good grass and forage abundantly. The farmers who have experimented have found that grazing good cattle on them is sensible farm business.

### Farms Too Small

In 1910 there were 2,859 farms in Gaston averaging 35.6 cultivated acres per farm. The county is 71st in size but 37th in number of farms. These figures indicate farms of smaller size than in most counties. A little more than half the farms were less than 50 acres in size, both cultivated and uncultivated acres considered. No farm was larger than 1,000 acres in size, and only 16 were between 500 and 1,000 acres. The farms of just about the right size for profitable farming numbered fewer than 600. It is thus apparent that expansive farm operations are the exception. The population is dense, the holdings as a rule are small, and farmers are forced to engage in intensive farming—which means hand-made crops, little improved farm machinery, high production costs, small profits, and little accu-

mulated farm wealth. So of necessity, unless these disadvantages are overcome by scientific knowledge, technical skill, and co-operative farm enterprise as in Denmark.

### **Decreasing Livestock**

Gaston suffered two significant losses during the census period. These were her two-fifths of one percent loss in poultry and her three percent loss in swine. While she was gaining over 32 percent in population, she was losing in two of the most important sources of meat supply. Only 21 counties lost in poultry production during the last census period and Gaston was one of them. Poultry is probably the cheapest possible source of meat supply for the farm table. The fowls eat waste grain and other things scattered in the fields and around the barn and yard, and while the farmer is missing nothing they are getting ready for the Sunday dinner table. Gaston people should take a lively interest in poultry production in sheer self-defense. Meat of every sort is soaring in price and they cannot afford to purchase it at present prices. Poultry yields quick returns and if used for egg production, is a constant source of income for the farm home. Poultry raising takes some time, attention and skill, but it is mostly clear profit on the farm.

The three percent decrease in swine production during the last census period was a cardinal loss; a mistake by the way that was made by 68 other counties in the state. Producing pork at 10 cents a pound is a better proposition than buying salt pork sides at 35 cents a pound as our farmers are doing to-day. It has been conclusively proved that the South, because of her cheap land and mild climate, can raise hogs more cheaply than any other section of the United States. This has not always been the case, but is to-day. It cannot be done when they are fed on corn alone but can be done when hogs are turned to rape, velvet beans, peanuts, and fattened with corn mixed with cotton-seed meal mixed in the ratio of three to four parts corn and one part meal.

The hog yields the quickest returns. One year is sufficient to grow a large porker while from three to four years is required to grow cattle of market size. The hog is the readiest source of meat supply in the cotton belt counties. Pease and beans can be planted with the corn and these with cotton meal make about the best and cheapest hog feed.

In 1910 only nine counties had more cattle per 1,000 acres than Gaston. She had 37 cattle per thousand acres while the state average was only 23. However the average for the United States was 61. In a densely populated county like Gaston the market demand at home for milk and butter, poultry and eggs, beef, pork, and mutton

offers steady profits to the nearby farmers—to say nothing of Charlotte and the mill towns in South Carolina.

Gaston is in every way admirably conditioned for livestock farming and livestock enterprises. Her farmers were wise in materially increasing their cattle during the census period. The ten-year increase was 27 percent and only 20 counties made greater gains. An agricultural prosperity based on livestock farming and livestock industries is the surest and safest prosperity. Livestock feeds the farm family and enriches the farm, and makes cotton a surplus money crop.

Although Gaston was one of the first 10 counties in cattle per 1,000 acres when the 1910 census was taken, her rank in swine was only 41st. The simple truth is that the county is 70 percent below the level of even a lightly stocked farm area. There is room for an immense increase in livestock farming in Gaston.

### A Cotton County

Gaston is one of the 28 counties in North Carolina in which more than half of the total annual crop wealth is produced by cotton alone. Or so it was in 1910. Gaston, being a small county, does not produce as many bales as some of the large counties, but the percent of total crop values produced by cotton is high. It was 59 percent or nearly three-fifths of the total crop wealth produced in 1910. In 1914 she produced 13,206 bales and ranked twenty-third among the other counties in the state in total number of bales produced. This total was 952 bales more than the crop of 1910; but in 1916 her cotton crop fell to 5,617 bales, and the production of food and feed crops probably increased proportionately. If so the county is at last headed in the right direction. The state average of non-food crops in 1910 was 53 percent; in 1919 it was 66 percent. Thus we see that Gaston, with 59 percent, was considerably below the state average in the production of food and feed crops. This fact largely explains why Gaston is below the state average in per capita country wealth. Her farmers failed to see the economic fallacy of buying bread and meat with cotton money—a policy that never yet made a farm community rich anywhere on earth. Holding down cotton money by a system of live-at-home farming would make Gaston and other cotton belt counties rich beyond the dreams of avarice in a single ten years. The present high cost of all food and feed supplies only emphasizes this truth. The live-at-home farmers of the middle west are the farmers that are reaping the largest profits and swelling their bank accounts most rapidly; not the cotton and tobacco farmers of the South, even with 36 cent cotton and 52 cent tobacco. If the automobile is a yardstick of prosperity the South holds about the same rank in wealth that she held in 1910. In Iowa in 1919 there was one automobile for every



6 inhabitants and in North Carolina there was only one for every 23. High-priced cotton and tobacco have meant no more to the South than high-priced food and feed crops have meant to the West.

The Department of Agriculture has suddenly realized that the South for long years has been committing economic suicide by her erroneous system of one-crop farming. The southern states are the natural garden spot of the nation. Our opportunities have been plainly visible but we have failed to see them. Thousands of experiments have proved that no section of the United States can compete with the South in the production of staple bread and meat products. Nevertheless we have allowed our time and effort to be consumed in the production of cotton and tobacco.

We should continue to produce these crops but not until we have fed ourselves and our farm animals. After that cotton and tobacco are mostly clear profit.

In Gaston and most other counties there are some dozens of farmers who clearly prosper beyond their neighbors. They are invariably live-at-home farmers, with cotton or tobacco or both as surplus money income. They are the farmers whose credit is good and whose bank account is large. But even demonstrations like these do not appear to influence the farmers who are cotton crazy. As Mr. Branson says, "Nothing short of sheer necessity and dire calamity will ever cause the southern farmer to change his ruinous method of farming." Our crop system came near bankrupting us in 1914, but we seem to have forgotten the calamity that hit the South that year.

Our Commissioner of Agriculture says he has never known a man who raised cotton to the exclusion of other crops escape a sheriff's sale. He also states that he has never heard of a man being sold out for taxes or debt who had a crib full of corn.

Probably you have observed the same thing.

### Home Gardens

The population of Gaston is not only large to the square mile but some 16,000 of the people are town dwellers and mill operatives. They are consumers, not producers of food—unless they are devoted to the cultivation of garden spaces around the homes. Here is not only a field of development open to Gaston people, but here is also a necessity that is a little keener in Gaston than in any other county in the state because a larger percent of her population is industrial. People here and elsewhere must raise a large measure of the food they eat or they will undoubtedly go hungry, under present conditions. We need to foster the impulse and the fine art of gardening. It should be ingrained in us as in the Chinese, the Italians, and the Portuguese. If we get the gardening habit out of this time of high prices, we will

have been well paid in the end. The most prosperous men in the faculty at the University are home gardeners.

The total farm wealth produced in Gaston by both crops and animal products in 1910 amounted to \$2,179,082. The total farm wealth produced in the county in four years is more than the farm wealth the farmers have been able to accumulate in 71 years of history. This is due mainly to the erroneous system of farming that has prevailed in Gaston these last 50 years. These farmers create wealth abundantly and spend it unnecessarily because of the prevailing defective system of cotton farming. Nearly half the total farm wealth of the county is produced by cotton alone. Cotton production need not be less but food crops should be more. It can be so: indeed it was so in Gaston and all over the South in 1915. We were driven to it by the low price of cotton. We ought to be driven to it now by the sheer force of common sense.

#### 1860 and 1910

The following table is compiled from the 1860, and the 1910 census reports and shows the animals on farms and the crops raised at these two periods.

Of the 19 particulars noted Gaston suffered a loss in 8. These losses were in horses, sheep, swine, wheat, rye, rice, tobacco, pease, and beans. Some of the gains look large but when we consider the increase in population, from 9,307 in 1860 to 37,063 in 1910, which was nearly a threefold increase, we see that in only three particulars did gains in crops or livestock really keep pace with gains in population. These were in cotton, butter, and hay production.

While there was a slight gain in the total amount of corn during the 50 years, the production per inhabitant decreased from 36.7 bushels in 1860 to 11 bushels in 1910. Similar per capita decreases are also true of other crops, with the exceptions named, but the largest per capita decreases were in the production of beef, pork, and mutton.

#### Facts About Farm Conditions and Practices

14th in Amount of land under cultivation; percent of total area .....	42.8
State average, 29 percent. Land under cultivation, 101,696 acres. Idle land, 135,744 acres, or 57.2 percent of the total area. Reserving 50,000 acres for wood-lot uses and allowing 75 acres to each family, there is room for 1,140 new farm families.	

37th in Number of farms, 1910.....	2,859
Average cultivated acres per farm 35.6. Size of cultivated farms larger in 38 counties, 1,483, or a little more than half, are less than 50 acres in size, both cultivated and uncultivated land considered. There is no farm of more than 1,000 acres in the county; and only 16 are more than 500 and less than 1,000 acres. Gaston is a land of small farms—and the average size is too small for profitable farming. Fewer than 600 farms are about the right size.	
79th in Poultry increases, 1900-10, percent.....	—4
20 counties lost in poultry production and Gaston ranks 20th in losses. In 1900 there were 62,756 fowls of all kinds in Gaston, in 1910 there were only 62,535 fowls. Johnston leads with 127,254.	
10th in Cattle per 1,000 acres, 1910 census.....	37
State average, 23; United States average, 61. In 1860 the cattle in Gaston numbered 5,495; in 1910 they were 7,552 for a population four times greater.	
21st in Cattle increase, 1900-10, percent.....	27
Caldwell increased 62 per cent; state average increase 12 percent.	
41st in Swine per 1,000 acres, 1910 census.....	34
State average, 39; United States average, 66; Iowa, 263. In 1860 the swine in Gaston were 15,335, but in 1910 they were only 6,585.	
33rd in Swine decrease, 1900-10, percent.....	3
Gaston was one of the 69 counties that decreased in swine production from 1900-10.	
57th in Sheep losses, 1900-10, percent.....	64
In 1860 there were 5,386 sheep in Gaston, but in 1910 only 501. The average value of sheep on the tax books of Gaston in 1917 was \$1.24 each; dogs \$15.27 each!	
20th in Livestock level, percent.....	30
19 counties make a better showing. There is room for a 70 percent increase in farm animals of all sorts.	
28th in Investment in farm implements per acre, 1910 census .....	\$2.47
State average, \$2.00; United States average, \$2.52.	

20th in Horsepower; one work animal for the following number of acres.....	22.69
State average, 25.85; United States average, 19.81.	
68th in Farm tenancy, 1910, percent.....	49.8
State average, 42.3 percent. Increase in farm tenancy in Gaston, 1900-10, was 5 percent. Forty-seven counties in the state decreased in farm tenancy. White farm owners in Gaston, 1,243; negro owners, 178. White tenants, 810; negro tenants, 613. The landless, homeless white tenants and their families number about 4,000 souls; 1,116 are share tenants, and only 243 are cash or standing rent tenants. Tenants raise cotton mainly and neglect food and feed crops.	
Diversified crops and livestock farming are impossible in an area of excessive farm tenancy.	
29th in Cotton production, total number of bales, 1915....	9,046
Robeson first with 47,102. In 1914 Gaston produced 13,206 bales, but in 1917 the crop fell to 5,564 bales and 34 counties raised a larger total. The 1919 crop promises to be the largest crop since 1915.	
18th in Non-food crops produced—cotton and so on.....	\$1,055,931
Non-food crops produce annually 59 percent of total crop values. Food and feed crops produce only 41 percent of the total crop values. State average of non-food crops is 53 percent. Manifestly Gaston is deficient in food production.	
22nd in Annual farm wealth produced.....	\$2,179,082
This total covers both crops and animal products. In four years' time the farmers produce more farm wealth than they have been able to accumulate in some seventy odd years. Fifty-nine percent of all crop wealth was produced by non-food crops. The need is for more and better livestock and for livestock industries such as cheese factories, creameries and the like.	
41st in Crop yielding power per acre, 1910.....	\$16.54
State average, \$20.18 in 1914.	
75th in Annual production of farm wealth per inhabitant...	\$69.60
State average, \$85. Average for the French farmer, \$126. Gaston's low average is largely due to the large number of mill operatives counted as country population.	

**GASTON FARMS IN 1860 AND 1910**

	1860	1910
Milk cows .....	2,299	4,192
Other cattle .....	3,196	3,360
Horses .....	1,650	1,642
Mules and asses .....	853	2,847
Sheep .....	5,366	501
Swine .....	15,335	6,585
Butter, lbs. ....	85,509	603,038
Wheat, bushels .....	74,060	45,677
Rye, bushels .....	637	573
Corn, bushels .....	343,893	410,058
Oats, bushels .....	17,216	59,080
Tobacco, lbs. ....	4,821	None
Cotton, bales .....	714	12,258
Pease and beans, bushels.....	8,808	3,621
Potatoes, Irish, bushels .....	4,922	10,888
Potatoes, sweet, bushels .....	21,304	48,791
Hay, tons .....	1,136	5,220

## VIII

# Food and Feed Production and the Local Market Problem

### Shortage, Two and a Third Million Dollars

The farm and pantry supplies consumed in Gaston in the census year amounted to two million, three hundred and seventy thousand dollars more than the farmers of the county produced. Which is to say the farms of Gaston failed by this sum to produce the food and feed needed for consumption by man and beast. And this deficit in home-raised supplies is a minimum figure, based on the annual consumption averages as given out by the federal authorities from time to time. This sum covers staple bread stuffs, not dainties, extras, and luxuries.

This shortage in detail covers 2,900,000 pounds of meat; 1,176,000 pounds of butter; 279,400 fowls; 335,900 dozen eggs; 738,900 bushels of corn; 102,600 bushels of wheat, and 4,100 tons of hay.

The one noticeable fact is that Gaston did not produce a surplus in any of the staple food and feed commodities. Most counties have a surplus of some one or two home-raised food supplies, but not so with Gaston.

Such is the deficit in home-raised food and feed products in 1910; the deficit was around 5 million dollars in 1919, unless the farmers of Gaston have given increased attention to food crops during the last nine years, which does not seem likely, considering the increase in cotton production.

### Why Our Farmers Fall Behind

Our farmers did not supply the two million, four hundred thousand dollar local market demand, because of (1) excessive attention to cotton; (2) excessive farm tenancy, under the crop-lien, time-credit system; (3) the lack of ready cash markets for home-raised supplies; and (4) the large proportion of town and mill population.

### Too Little Home-raised Supplies

Fifty-nine percent of the total crop wealth produced in Gaston year by year is produced by cotton alone, and up to 1914 this ratio had steadily increased for half a century.

The farmers of Gaston have been giving increasing attention to cotton and decreasing attention to grain crops, hay and forage, domestic animals and livestock. One proof of this is that 81 counties made greater increases than Gaston in farm sales of dairy products during the census period 1900-09. Seventy-eight counties made more rapid progress in poultry. Gaston actually had fewer poultry in 1910 than in 1900.

In 1910 the population was nearly 33 percent greater than in 1900, and the corn crop was 43 percent greater, but the increase in cotton production during the same period was 126 percent. The cotton increase was three times the corn increase. As a result the shortage in home-raised corn in 1910 was 738,895 bushels. A corn shortage of this sort in 1919 would take out of the county more than a million dollars in cash. Producing corn at 38 cents a bushel, as 12 of your Corn Club Boys of Gaston did in 1916, is far better than paying \$2.00 a bushel for it, as the farmers are doing to-day.

During the ten years 1900-09, the county lost 64 percent of her sheep. Gaston has been steadily losing in sheep since 1860, at which time there were 5,366 sheep in the county; in 1910 there were only 501.

Furthermore the loss in swine during this period was 3 percent. Between 1860 and 1910 swine in Gaston fell from 15,335 to 6,585. During this half century there was a 57 percent loss in the total number of swine.

Gaston was one of 20 counties that decreased in poultry during the census period 1900-09. Her loss was two-fifths of one percent.

Even in 1860 with crude methods of thrashing, nearly twice as much wheat was produced in Gaston as in 1910. In 1860 the farmers produced nearly 8 bushels per inhabitant, or twice as much as needed for every man, woman, and child in the county. During the fifty year period the wheat crop fell from 8 to 1.23 bushels per inhabitant, or less than one-third the amount needed for human consumption.

In 1910 Gaston was the most densely populated rural community in North Carolina, having an average of 84.4 country people to the square mile. But there were 135,744 idle acres in the county; which is to say, 57.2 percent of the total area was in broomsedge, old field pine, and scrub timber.

In 1916 twelve Corn Club Boys in Gaston averaged 46.8 bushels to the acre, or more than three times the average for the county at large in 1910. At this rate the farmers in Gaston could have produced 1,250,000 bushels or 100,000 bushels more than were needed for man and beast. Raising a surplus of corn beats importing or needing to import over 700,000 bushels at two dollars a bushel.

In 1910 nearly exactly half of the farms of Gaston were cultivated by tenants, and farm tenancy under the crop-lien, time-credit system

in the South means more cotton, and less attention to food and feed crops such as grain, hay and forage, nuts, vegetables, poultry and dairy products, beef, mutton, and pork.

The annual consumption of these products in Gaston in 1910 amounted to three and a half million dollars' worth, but the farms of the county produced less than twelve hundred thousand dollars' worth of them. As a result over two and a quarter million dollars in cold cash went, or needed to go, out of the county to pay for food and feed supplies that might have been raised at home; and the power of the people to accumulate wealth was lessened by just so much.

### **The Penalties We Pay**

As a result, the per capita country wealth in Gaston in the census year was only \$275 and forty-six counties in the state made a better showing. In Alleghany it was \$560, in the United States \$994, and in Iowa \$3,386.

Gaston ranked 22nd in North Carolina in production of total crop values but only 47th in per capita country wealth. Alleghany which raises no cotton and very little tobacco leads the counties in North Carolina in this particular.

Gaston suffers a steady loss of cash year by year amounting to over two and a quarter million dollars. Or so it is in average years. This fact largely explains why the food and feed farmers of the Middle West grow rich and the cotton and tobacco farmers of the South remain poor. We produce wealth amazingly but retain wealth feebly.

The high cost of living in the towns and cities of the cotton belt results from the fact that they have to import their food from the far-away West over more than a thousand miles of railroads. An innumerable host of middlemen add to the consumer's bill, because each must have his profit. The part of the consumer's dollar which goes to pay for packing, transporting, jobbing, retailing, and delivery is much more than the producer gets for his products, and this part increases as the distance increases. If the farmers of nearby towns and cities produced the food needed for home and town consumption, both consumer and producer would be benefited, for the consumer would get more for his dollar and the producer would get more for his product.

### **Gaston's Interest in Local Produce Markets**

Gastonia and other towns in Gaston, like towns and cities elsewhere, are interested in the local market problem, because, in the first place, it concerns the increasing high cost of living. The whole world is menaced by this primary problem to-day, because once more in the round of history population presses upon the food supply. It



is next to impossible to pick up a newspaper and miss seeing a long article about the high cost of living, its causes and the remedies. It is the fundamental question facing the American people and the rest of the world to-day. The cost of foodstuffs is everywhere higher while the purchasing power of the dollar is less. To-day it is barely a third what it was twenty years ago; that is to say, 30 or 35 cents then would buy as much food as a dollar will buy to-day. Forty-nine cents in 1915 would buy as much of home necessities as one hundred cents will do to-day.

If Gastonia and Gaston must depend on the far-away West for food and feed supplies to the extent of over two million dollars a year, the overhead cost of transportation and handling by a swarming multitude of middlemen will of course add enormously to the cost of pantry supplies.

### **Gaston's Crop-Producing Power**

Gaston county farmers can easily produce all the standard food crops, meat, and milk needed for consumption in Gaston. Her soils are good and capable of being brought to a high state of cultivation with proper methods of farming. The crop yielding power per acre in 1910 was \$16.54 and only forty counties of the state made a better showing. Much of Gaston's area is better suited to livestock farming than to cotton production. The hillside areas of Gaston are better suited to pasture-land farming than much of more level lands elsewhere in the state. Only thirty-seven counties produced more corn per acre in 1910. The Corn Club Boys of the county averaged over 46 bushels to the acre in 1916 and the county could easily produce corn enough and to spare. But Gaston has been and is now depending upon the West for meal and flour, when she can produce these commodities as cheaply and abundantly as any other county in the Piedmont region, if only the farmers were minded to do it. Not even 35-cent cotton will buy much corn at \$2.00 a bushel and flour at \$15.00 a barrel, the price they are bringing to-day.

In the census year the per-acre producing power of Gaston averaged \$16.54. It was slightly higher than the average for the country-at-large. In North Carolina her rank was 41st in this particular. The average for the county was high because 59 percent of the total crop wealth was produced by cotton alone. Cotton is a hand-made crop and tends to yield large gross values per acre, but low values per worker. This is shown by the fact that Gaston fell to the 75th place in the production of farm wealth per inhabitant in 1910. This average was only \$58.70, while the average for the state was \$85.00. Gaston's low average is also due in part to her large mill population, who are consumers not producers of food supplies.

However Gaston and other cotton belt counties raise cotton because

the whole world is an organized market for it. The farmer does not need to seek markets for his cotton, the market seeks him. He can sell it for instant ready cash and can establish credit upon it even before it is planted. But not so in the case of food crops and animal products.

#### **Poor Market Facilities**

There is no organized local market in Gaston for food and feed crops. The farmer must peddle his vegetables, fruits, butter and eggs, meat and poultry, from door to door or sell it to a merchant at a shamefully low price. Often the merchant will not buy the supplies outright, but will offer to sell them on commission. Then again, the farmer floods the market in seasons of plenty, and at other seasons when things are high and scarce he has little or nothing to sell. The producers and consumers are not organized in ways advantageous to both. They are as far apart as though they lived on separate planets.

The producers and consumers of Gaston suffer from the Iron Law of Trade as do any other people. This law is: keep producers and consumers as far apart as possible; pass economic goods from the one to the other through as many hands as possible; charge consumers as much as possible; and pay producers as little as possible. As long as this law is in operation both consumers and producers must suffer. They can be brought together only through co-operation. Wherever there is lack of organized co-operation between producers and consumers, or wherever there is suspicion, disunion, and collision, both suffer alike. Producers receive too little for their produce, and consumers pay too much.

#### **Missing An Opportunity**

Gaston with her large town population and her dense rural areas is missing a great opportunity. Few counties in the state have a finer chance for the co-operation of city and country people in producing and marketing home-raised food supplies. These city people must consume food, and there is no place in the world where it can be raised more cheaply for the cities and towns in Gaston than in Gaston county. When raised by home farmers and delivered to home consumers, the heavy cost of transportation and the vast host of middlemen are eliminated. The producer could get more for his products and at the same time consumers would pay less. Gaston's greatest chance to achieve abiding prosperity lies in the co-operation of her city and country populations, upon the basis of good will and mutual advantage.

For instance, there ought to be a co-operative creamery in Gaston, as in Lincoln, Mecklenburg, Union, and a half dozen other counties

in the state. This creamery would of course need to have a constant milk supply. It would need milk wagons to collect cream at regular intervals. A manager would have charge of every detail of the finances and make out the checks at the end of a week or two weeks. The farmers would receive profits in proportion to the amount of cream they supplied. This creamery could help to supply the vast demand for butter in Gaston, in Charlotte, and farther afield, and besides it would furnish the farmers and housewives with a steady cash income week by week. The creamery helps to build up dairy farming as a profitable community enterprise; it means permanent pastures, winter cover crops, silos, and better breeds of dairy cows.

Such creameries ususally engage in related business, as collecting and shipping eggs, poultry, meats, fruits, and the like, for their patrons. This would be a profitable side-line in the proposed creamery for Gastonia.

The capital required to start a co-operative creamery in Gaston would not be prohibitive, considering the wealth of the county. What is required is an energetic man who understands the business of creameries and the marketing of creamery products. Farm prosperity in Wisconsin is based directly on her 3,500 creameries, condenseries, and cheese factories.

### **Doubling Our Farm Wealth**

But leaving city and town consumers out of consideration, the farmers ought to produce the supplies that they themselves need for their farm families and their farm animals year by year. If only the farmers could or would stop spending a million or so for these things year by year, the farm wealth of Gaston would be doubled within the next five years.

Gaston farmers cannot afford not to raise cotton—in fact they need to raise more cotton; but while they do it they will be wise to have their barns, cribs, pantries, and smoke-houses filled with home-raised supplies.

As for the additional million and a quarter dollars' worth of such products as consumers in the towns of Gaston need, the farmers are never likely to raise them till city consumers and country dwellers, bankers, boards of trade, and farmers get together to solve the local market problem. The nearby farmers will produce these food supplies if they can sell them for ready cash at a fair price and profit in Gastonia and the other towns in the county; and not otherwise.

### **The Test of Success**

The local market problem, created by the demand for breadstuffs at high prices and the failure of the nearby farmers to supply this

demand, is perplexing every city in America. And now that we must feed an impoverished Europe, the solution of the problem has become a great national and international necessity. The time has come when every farm must be self-feeding; and more, it must produce a surplus. Every inch of garden space around town homes must be cultivated by town dwellers. Especially does President Wilson urge southern farmers to grow larger food crops, for unless they do they will be a burden on the rest of the nation.

The law of markets is a greed for gain. It is the tooth and claw struggle for price and profit. This primary law of human nature organizes a world-wide market for cotton; and at the same time and for the same reason it denies producers and consumers of breadstuffs, living side by side in the same county, an even chance or opportunity for direct dealing with mutual advantage.

### **The Solution of the Problem**

Greed safely counts upon the dull unconcern of both producers and consumers. Finally consumers wake up to the fact that the cost of living is a national problem. And it is intensely a local problem with the mass of wage earners in Gaston who as elsewhere in America have failed to cultivate vacant fields and lots at odd hours as the factory people of Belgium have long been in the habit of doing. Consumers and producers are too far apart. The cost of marketing is now too great, and the price of food supplies is too high to leave any doubt about the necessity of farm and garden production of foodstuffs in every community.

### **How Great?**

How great the cost of marketing is can be shown from figures compiled by the Citrus Fruit Growers' Association of California. These growers have done everything in their power to reduce the middlemen to a minimum and pass fruit from producers to consumers with as little cost as possible. Yet even with all their business skill they have found that the part of the consumer's dollar that gets back to the producer is only twenty-seven cents. The middlemen—pickers, transporters, and merchants got seventy-three cents of the consumer's dollar. The hard fact about marketing is that as a rule it costs more to get goods from producers to consumers than it costs to produce those goods; and the greater the distance the greater the cost. This is especially true of fruit and vegetable marketing. This fact coupled with our unsurpassed natural advantages of climate and soil makes it foolish for us to fail to produce these things at home.

What we want to do is to get the farmers of Gaston to produce these things and sell first to people in Gaston and then to outsiders.

The county must keep its money at home if it wishes to accumulate wealth in accelerated ratios, in town and country regions alike.

The problem is to get Gaston producers and consumers together; the principle of action lies in co-operation, and success is achieved when farmers get more for their products and consumers get more for their money. If farmers do not get more for their products and at the same time consumers do not pay less, then the problem is not solved, no matter how elaborate the attempt or expensive the market house.

### **More Grain Crops Needed**

The fact that Gaston ranked 82nd in North Carolina in corn production per person should cause her to stop and consider somewhat. The people in Gaston probably would not need as much corn as many other counties in the state for they do not have their proportion of work animals. This is due to the fact that many town and mill people have no horses, mules, or cattle for that matter. These people would not need to have 31 bushels of corn per inhabitant, the average needed in the United States; but the people in Gaston fail sadly to produce even what they do need. They produced only 11 bushels for each person in Gaston in 1910, while the state average was 15 bushels and the state deficit was 16 bushels per inhabitant. It is poor business policy to import corn when over half the land in Gaston is lying idle. That she can produce corn abundantly is shown by the rank of the county in yield per acre in 1910. Only 37 counties produced more bushels per acre in the census year.

### **Wheat**

Wheat and corn together constitute the two chief grain crops the county needs. At present wheat is selling in Charlotte at \$2.25 a bushel, and the price in North Carolina is higher than in any of the main wheat producing states. Flour is now selling at the enormous price of \$15 dollars a barrel, and Gaston as well as other counties in the state is failing to produce this year of all the years the wheat that is needed for home consumption. There is a need for 4 bushels of wheat per inhabitant but in 1910 Gaston farmers produced only 1.23 bushels per person. The deficit was 102,575 bushels. This year the county faces as great a wheat shortage as ever and as high prices as ever will prevail. And this at a time when the idle acres of Gaston number 135,000 or more!

### **Meats**

In the production of meat Gaston makes one of the poorest showings in the state. The production of livestock products in 1910 was

only \$10.70 per person and her rank was 77th among the 100 counties of the state. Her rank was 61st in beef production per person, the amount produced being 21.6 pounds while the state average was 33.8 pounds. Eighty-three counties produced more poultry per person than Gaston. The fowls produced were only 4.46 per inhabitant while the need was for 12 per inhabitant. Eighty-three counties produced more eggs per inhabitant. But the saddest fact of all is that Gaston took 92nd place in pork production per person in 1910. Her need was for 122 pounds per person, and she produced only 19 pounds of this amount. In 1860 Gaston had 15,335 hogs while in 1910 she had only 6,585. The growing of hogs is equally important with the growing of cattle. It is the form of livestock activity from which the farmer gets the quickest returns; because twelve months is sufficient time to get returns from a hog, while from two to four years is required to get returns from cattle.

An expert in the livestock industry says: "My contention is that hog growing is the phase of livestock industry that should be given the first attention by the cotton farmers in the South, for the reason that returns can be had from this kind of livestock growing more quickly than from cattle, and taken as a whole the hog is more easily grown and handled than cattle." By the time our farmers have had experience with hogs for a few years, they will have absorbed enough livestock information to make them better fitted for cattle growing.

Gaston farmers can raise meat for home consumption for less money than it costs them when it is imported from the West. This is true at ordinary times, but doubly true to-day.

### **Coöperation Necessary**

Producers alone cannot solve the local market problem. Success calls for the direct co-operation of producers and consumers; and in big scale marketing it invariably calls for and depends upon the credit accommodation of the local banks. If consumers are unconcerned and unorganized, or if banks and transportation companies are neglectful or hostile, the farmers' chance of success is reduced to zero. Success lies in collusion, not collision; in co-operation, not in contest.

### **Texas Leads**

Texas has taken a long step forward in solving the local market problem on a big scale, and one of the many things she does with the help of her boards of trade in city centers is to maintain free telephone market information exchanges in charge of competent officials, whose business it is to furnish reliable, disinterested market news to city dwellers and farmers and to bring consumers and producers together in direct dealings for mutual advantage.

### **What the Banks Can Do**

Texas banks are refusing to loan money to supply-merchants who do a crop-lien business protected by cotton acreage alone. They have a half-and-half system. They stipulate a minimum acreage which must be planted in foodstuffs, and farmers who receive loans are required to raise a specified amount on this acreage. What they call a half-and-half crop-lien (one-half cotton and one-half food and feed crops) is the only kind of crop-lien the supply-merchant can borrow money on at the bank. In short, the bankers are forcing the supply-merchants to force the farmers to raise a sufficiency of bread and meat on every farm. It is sound sense and safe business policy, they say, to keep in Texas the 217 million dollars that have been leaving the state heretofore year by year to pay the bill for imported food supplies.

This policy insures a food producing farm civilization, and this means prosperity. It also means safer, bigger, better business for the supply-merchants and bankers.

### **Progress in Texas**

The following comment is taken from a report issued by the Texas Bankers' Association: "There have been more hogs, more cattle, more poultry, more food for the table and more feedstuffs for livestock produced in Texas this year than in many years, and the farmers of the country are in better financial condition than they could possibly have been if they had continued the one-crop policy heretofore followed. A few more years of wise diversification in lines promulgated by the Texas Bankers' Association will place in an independent financial condition the farmers who follow the policy, and will ensure a permanent continuance of progress in agriculture that will make us the richest section in the United States."

"The bankers and merchants, then, have in their hands the most powerful weapon in the cause of sound agriculture—credit. So long as money is loaned on the prospect of a single cash-crop alone, so long will the average farmer be compelled to raise that crop alone, with all the attendant evils of such a system. When credit is made available for other purposes, when cash markets are encouraged, and the teaching of sound agricultural practice fostered, the road to prosperity is opened."

### **In North Carolina**

This same system could be put to work in this state, especially in the cotton counties of the east and along the South Carolina line where conditions are similar to those in Texas. We have conclusively

proved that we cannot accumulate farm wealth in largest measure under our one-crop, or single crop, system of farming. We stay poor while the West grows rich. The bankers can do more to solve this problem in a single year than all other agencies are likely to do in a lifetime; and they can do it almost by lifting or lowering of their eyebrows. They can kill the crop-lien by starvation better than the state can by legislation. The old-time crop-lien means more cotton and less bread and meat.

And at the same time Gastonia and other Gaston towns must get ready with arrangements, conveniences and facilities for doing a larger business in home-raised food and feed supplies.

One North Carolina bank lends money for the purchase of breeding stock only on condition that the borrower agrees to follow the advice of the county agricultural agent or the animal husbandry expert from the agricultural college. In this way the county agent becomes of direct value to bankers and merchants, protecting their interests by increasing the security of their loans at the same time that he benefits farmers by increasing profitable production. It follows that the maintenance of these county agents should receive the financial support of all classes in the community.

### **The Farmers' End of the Problem**

On the other hand the farmers must not only produce food and feed supplies for home consumption, but a million and a quarter dollars' worth more for the city and town consumers in Gaston in average years. To-day, the town consumers call for three million dollars' worth of home-raised bread and meat. The farmers must know more about market demands. They must not dump all their food products on a small market at one and the same time. What they offer for sale in competition with the big wide world must look and taste just as good as imported products. They must become expert in picking, handling, grading, packing and crating. They must produce grain and hay, meat, butter, and eggs in steady and reliable sufficiencies, and stand ready to supply market demands just as western markets do upon telegraphic orders. They must can and store vegetables and fruits that otherwise go to waste. They must learn the arts of butchering, curing and sacking ham, bacon, and shoulders, fly and skipper proof packer-fashion, and create a steady year-around business in meat products.

The blame at present rests upon farmers, bankers, merchants, and consumers. In Gaston in 1910 the local market problem in home-raised products was a two and a third million dollar proposition. In 1919 it is a five million dollar proposition. It is worth solving. It is worth the consideration of the best intelligence in the county.



**THE LOCAL MARKET PROBLEM OF GASTON**

Based on the 1910 Census

**1. FOOD AND FEED:**

Needed—37,063 people @ \$84.00.....	\$3,112,292
5,115 work animals @ \$39.39.....	\$201,480
5,212 dairy cattle @ \$18.55.....	96,683
3,589 other cattle @ \$8.09.....	29,035
529 sheep @ \$1.79.....	947
8,163 swine @ \$6.69.....	34,610
	382,755

Total food and feed needed.....\$3,496,047

**2. FOOD AND FEED:**

Produced—Food and feed crops.....	\$729,993
Dairy products .....	\$127,344
Poultry products .....	115,616
Honey and wax.....	3,408
Animals sold and slaughtered.....	149,417
	\$395,785

Total food and feed produced.....\$1,125,778

Shortage in home-raised food and feed.....2,370,269

Cotton and other non-food crop values.....1,055,931

**3. DISTRIBUTION OF FOOD AND FEED SHORTAGE:**

(1) Meat needed for 37,063 people @ 152 pounds.....	5,633,576
produced 1,166 calves @ at 150 lbs...	174,900
1,789 cattle @ 350 lbs.....	626,150
165,354 poultry @ 3½ lbs....	578,739
6,863 swine @ 200 lbs.....	1,373,600

Total meat produced.....2,733,389

Shortage .....2,900,187

*Pounds.*

(2) Butter needed for 37,063 people @ 48 lbs.....	1,779,024
produced .....	603,038
deficit .....	1,175,986

*Fowls.*

(3) Fowls needed for 37,063 people @ 12 fowls.....	444,754
produced .....	165,354
deficit .....	279,400

*Dozen.*

(4) Eggs needed for 37,063 people @ 17½ dozen.....	648,602
produced .....	312,718
deficit .....	335,884

	<i>Bushels.</i>
(5) Corn needed for 37,063 people @ 31 bushels.....	1,148,953
produced .....	410,058
deficit .....	738,895
	<i>Bushels.</i>
(6) Wheat needed for 37,063 people @ 4 bushels.....	148,252
produced .....	45,677
deficit .....	102,575
	<i>Tons.</i>
(7) Hay needed for 5,115 work animals @ 10 lbs. per day.	9,235
produced .....	5,220
deficit .....	4,115

### HOW GASTON RANKS IN FOOD AND FEED PRODUCTION

#### Based on the 1910 Census

86th in Food and feed production per person.....	\$30
Needed, \$84.00 per person; deficit \$54.00 per person. As long as Gaston sends out of her borders \$54.00 per inhabitant for food she could easily produce at home, her farm wealth accumulation will remain small.	
82nd in Corn production per person, bushels.....	11
Needed per person per year, 31 bushels (for man and beast); deficit per person, 20 bushels. Total deficit for Gaston, 738,895 bushels. State average production, 15 bushels per person.	
28th in Corn production, bushels .....	410,058
Robeson ranked first with 1,142,000 bushels. Ten-year increase in corn production, 1900 to 1909, was 43 percent, or 176,000 bushels.	
38th in Corn production per acre, bushels.....	14
State average, 14.3 bushels per acre. Dare ranked first with 28 bushels.	
39th in Wheat production per person, bushels.....	1.23
Needed 4 bushels per person; deficit per person, 2.77 bushels, or a total deficit of 102,575 bushels. Only 15 counties in 1910 raised wheat surpluses. Ten-year decrease in wheat production in Gaston, 52 percent. State average decrease, 1900-09, was 12 percent.	
48th in Wheat production per acre, bushels.....	7
State average, 8 bushels per acre. Wayne ranked first with 30 bushels per acre.	

13th in Oats production, total crop, bushels.....	59,080
The oats raised amounted to 2.31 pints per work animal per day; rank, 15th. Ten-year increase in oats production, 1900-09, 190 percent; rank in this particular, 9th.	
16th in Hay and forage production, total crop, tons.....	5,220
Ten-year increase, 1900-09, was 78 percent; rank, 41st. The hay and forage produced was 5.6 pounds per work animal per day; the need is for 10 pounds per day.	
7th in Percent of farms buying feed, 1910 census.....	17
Four hundred and eighty-five, or about one-fifth of them bought feed averaging \$38.25 per farm.	
61st in Beef production per person, pounds.....	21.16
State average, 33.8 pounds.	
92nd in Pork production per person, pounds.....	19
State average, 93 pounds. State average of hogs sold and slaughtered, .47 of a hog; United States, .57; Iowa, 2.72 hogs. Needed for home consumption, 122 pounds per person per year. Deficit, 103 pounds.	
84th in Poultry production per person, fowls.....	4.46
Needed 12 fowls per person per year; deficit, 7.54 fowls. Total deficit, 279,400 fowls.	
84th in Egg deficit, dozens.....	335,900
Needed 17.5 dozen per person per year. Produced 8.25 dozen, leaving a deficit of 9.25 dozen per person.	
82nd in Increase in farm sales of dairy products, 1900-09, percent .....	38
Total sales in 1910 were \$54,151. State increase was 146 percent. Gaston produced 16 pounds of butter per inhabitant in 1910. The average amount needed was 48 pounds. Per capita deficit was 32 pounds per person.	
77th in Livestock products per person.....	\$13.00
Alleghany, \$65.00; state average, \$17.00.	
71st in Per capita crop production in Gaston.....	\$48.00
Total farm wealth produced was \$65.00 per person.	
46th in Crop wealth produced per farm worker.....	\$230.00
90th in Bill for imported food and feed supplies.....	\$2,378,000
In less than four years the value of such imported supplies equals the farm wealth accumulated in 71 years of history.	

- 8th in Boys' Corn Club enrollment in 1915, reporting..... 32  
 Caldwell and Wake stood first with 75 boys reporting in each county. The average per acre production by the club boys in Gaston was 44.1 bushels, or three times the average for the county at large. At this rate the grown-ups might have produced enough for home consumption and 100,000 bushels to sell. Instead they had a deficit of 741,000 bushels.
- 33rd in Girls' Canning Club, reporting in 1916..... 37  
 These 37 girls prepared 4,715 tins and glasses of fruits and vegetables, and their profits aggregated \$946.30. The profits of the 3,453 canning club girls in the state for 1916 were \$88,384. They prepared 680,551 tins and glasses of fruits and vegetables.

### GASTON COUNTY LIVESTOCK 1910 CENSUS

<i>I. Animal Units on Hand.</i>	<i>Animal Units.</i>
4,349 Mature work animals.....	= 4349
100 Yearling colts .....	1/2 = 50
33 Spring colts .....	1/4 = 8
4,192 Dairy cows .....	= 4192
3,360 Other cattle .....	1/2 = 1680
4,646 Mature hogs .....	1/5 = 929
1,939 Spring pigs .....	1/10 = 194
394 Mature sheep .....	1/7 = 56
107 Lambs .....	1/14 = 8
62,535 Poultry .....	1/100 = 625
<hr/>	
Total animal units.....	12,091
II. Animal units needed = $237,440 \div 5 =$ .....	47,488
Percent of animals in a lightly stocked farm area.....	25%
Below the level.....	75%

NOTE.—(1) A lightly stocked area has 1 animal unit for every 5 acres.

(2) An animal unit is 1 work animal, 1 milk cow, 2 other cattle, 2 yearling colts, or 4 spring colts; 5 hogs or 10 pigs; 7 sheep or 14 lambs; or 100 laying hens.

## IX

# Things to be Proud of in Gaston County

We shall not attempt to mention all the things that Gaston county has to be proud of. Such a task would be impossible in the brief space of a single chapter. Gaston like every other county has within her borders conditions of all kinds. Some are good, some are bad, others are indifferent. Let us note a few of the fine things in Gaston county.

### Population

In the census year, 1910, Gaston ranked 9th among the counties of the state in population, having within her borders 37,063 people. Much of this population is distributed among the numerous towns but not an over proportionate amount of it, as is proved by the fact that Gaston ranks first in density of rural population with 84.4 people to the square mile. Gaston's population is well balanced with respect to town and country dwellers. The prosperous towns in Gaston are not growing at the expense of her country regions. Only two counties in the state had greater increases in rural population from 1900 to 1910 than Gaston. The increase was 34.4 percent, and seven-eighths of this increase consisted of white people. The negroes are a diminishing ratio of population in Gaston, the ten-year decrease being 3.1 percent. Gaston is a county of rapidly increasing population, and it is white, home-bred, and wholly American—not a mongrel mixture of alien races as in the leading cotton-mill centers of New England, Bristol, Providence, and Middlesex.

The towns of Gaston are growing rapidly. They are springing up almost over night, largely at the expense of the surrounding counties. Some of her neighboring counties lost in population, great numbers of them going to the flourishing towns and mill centers in Gaston.

Gaston may well be proud of the fact that industrial conditions in her borders are such as to attract population from neighboring counties.

Assuming that Gaston has increased in population as fast since 1910 as she increased during the preceding ten years, she had within her borders in 1919 a few more than 48,000 people.

Gaston is not an area of race suicide. Only twenty-one counties of the state have a higher birth rate. Our rank in 1910 was 34.8 per 1,000 of population while the average for the state was 31.2 in 1914 and for the United States only 26.6 in 1913.

Neither are the people of Gaston a self-destroying population. Only one man in the county committed suicide in 1913, while in many other years not a single case of suicide occurs. Suicides are usually the outcome of dissipation, money troubles, unhappy home life, speculation and the like. Evidently instable nerves and unhappy conditions are rare in Gaston.

### Wealth

Gaston can boast of unusual wealth, as wealth is estimated in North Carolina. She is one of the smallest counties in the state, yet one of the richest. Nor is the wealth of Gaston as unevenly distributed as one might suppose—as it usually is in industrial areas. For instance, Gaston ranks 16th in total farm wealth, and bear in mind, she is only 71st in size in North Carolina. She has not built her great textile plants at the expense of the farm regions. Indeed, she was far advanced in agriculture before her textile mills became prominent, and agriculture continues to play an important part in her life. This is strongly evidenced by the fact that Gaston gained 165 percent in farm wealth from 1900 to 1910, and only 16 counties made more rapid increase. Her total farm wealth in 1910, the last census period, was \$8,628,686 and only 15 counties were wealthier in this respect though 70 were larger.

Then too, the people of Gaston country regions show a greater willingness to list their farm properties at something like their census values than 91 other counties of the state. Only six counties put their farm properties on the tax books at a higher ratio of census values. A county can easily have a low tax rate on farm properties when this condition exists.

Gaston has made rapid progress in taxable wealth, and the total now reaches a large figure. In 1918 she had a grand total of property listed for taxation amounting to \$21,068,775 and only seven counties in the state had larger totals. Gaston to-day is making more rapid progress in taxable wealth than ever before in her history. During the ten-year period 1908-1918, her taxables almost doubled. That is to say, in ten years her taxable wealth increased almost as much as all her properties listed and assessed for taxation amounted to in 1908. At this rate only five years hence, 1925, will find Gaston ranking second in wealth among the counties of the state, or first it may be.

Gaston with her numerous cotton mill towns has few superiors in the production of wealth. She has a rare combination of conditions favorable to the steady and continuing creation of new wealth; a densely settled farm area, a prosperous agricultural region supporting thriving towns devoted mainly to manufacture. As long as the county preserves and promotes her agricultural interests she will continue to have a distinct advantage over competing counties which are destroying their surrounding farm regions in order to build up mill centers.

### **Banking**

In 1915 Gaston ranked 32nd in combined bank stock with \$7.12 per inhabitant, and 19th in bank loans and discounts, with \$43.70 per inhabitant. In 1918 her bank account savings amounted to \$1,006,659 or \$22 per inhabitant, and in this particular 26 counties made a better showing. It will be seen that Gaston's rank on these dates is far behind what might have been expected of a county ranking 7th in total taxables and first as a textile center.

However, the combined totals of the last figures in 1918 showed that Gaston made three-year gains of 21 percent in invested bank capital, 100 percent in total deposits, and 225 percent in bank account savings. These figures mean that banking in Gaston is rapidly climbing to the top of the column. Nevertheless, the banking facilities of Gaston probably fall short of the local demands of business, as in Winston-Salem and Durham. There is ample opportunity for immense expansion in the business of banking in Gaston. The First National Bank of Gastonia is seizing upon it. This bank has just moved into a new ten-story, half million dollar building. The building projects of Gastonia all told run into ten million dollars in 1920.

### **Agriculture**

Gaston may congratulate herself because while establishing a textile industry that leads the South she has pursued the wise policy of never allowing her agricultural interests to lag. The far-seeing men of the county have been steadily at the heels of the farmers urging them on to the development of a wholesome, healthy, and prosperous agricultural life. A group of a half-dozen public-spirited men or women is always to be found in any progressive county. This group has been conspicuously active in Gaston.

However, do not let us get the idea that Gaston is a model agricultural county. Far from it. But being so highly developed in the textile industry, she makes a very favorable showing in many ways.

Probably the most striking fact discovered in this particular is Gaston's high rank in total farm wealth. She is one of the smallest counties of the state, yet she had greater farm wealth in 1910 than any one of 85 other counties in the state. This is a remarkable fact. And she is gaining in farm wealth with amazing rapidity. In the ten-year period from 1900 to 1910 there was an increase in farm properties amounting to 165 per cent. Only 16 counties made greater gains. The total farm wealth, land, buildings, livestock, and farm implements, amounted to \$8,628,686 according to census values, which, by the way, are always lower than current market prices. Since 1910 there have been wonderful gains and to-day, 1919, the total of farm wealth in Gaston is well up and round \$20,000,000.

### Land and Farms

The average farmer in Gaston cultivates only 35.6 acres of land. The size of cultivated farms is larger in only 38 counties. The point is, we have no cause to worry about the lack of land, with 136,000 uncultivated acres in the county. We have abundance of unused farm land, and we need a thousand or more new farm families to bring it under cultivation. There is ample elbow room in Gaston for home-seeking farmers.

The county is a land of small farmers and the problem of one man or firm holding large tracts for speculation is almost unknown. There is no farm of more than 1,000 acres in the county and only 16 comprise more than 500 acres. It might indeed be said that farms in Gaston are, as a rule, too small for profitable farming. There are about 600 farms in the county of the right size for diversified cropping, improved farm machinery, and livestock farming.

The county may be proud of the fact that the farmers of Gaston have awakened to the need of cattle and their importance on every farm. The saddest thing in our agricultural life in this state is the amazingly small part cattle and other forms of livestock play on our farms. Our farms are too lightly stocked and will continue to be so as long as the craze for cotton or tobacco lasts. We have not been wise in our farm practices, especially during the last two decades. We might by now have been one of the richest farm regions on earth had we been self-feeding and self-financing in our farm regions. We have sent out too much money for grain, hay, and forage, beef, pork, and mutton, butter, cheese and canned goods that could have been produced at home. Gaston has been guilty along with all the rest of the counties of the state; but she is awakening earlier than most of them. She has made gains in the number and breed of cattle. Only 20 counties made more rapid gains in livestock from 1900 to 1910 than Gaston. Her increase was 27 percent while the state average increase was less than half that ratio. In 1910 only 9 counties had more cattle per 1,000 acres, her number being 37. She may be proud of her gains in cattle, and the last census period, it is hoped, will show even greater increases. However, in swine, poultry, and sheep we are playing a losing game for there was an actual decrease of 3 percent in swine over 1900, and a decrease of 64 percent in sheep from 1900-1910. All these forms of livestock should play an important role on Gaston county farms, for they lessen fertilizer bills, add fertility to soils, feed farm families in large part, and leave cotton to form a main source of cash income. A permanently prosperous farm life is impossible wherever there is a dearth of livestock.

Gaston may also be proud of her high rank in the annual production of farm wealth which in 1910 amounted to \$2,179,000. Only 21 counties produced a greater total. The same quantity of products



this year would be worth around \$5,000,000, a neat sum for a textile county.

Scotchmen claim that oats when fed to man or beast produce superior qualities in both. The Scotch are a large element of the population in Gaston, which goes far toward explaining why the county ranks ahead of 87 others in oats production. The crop of 1910 amounted to 59,000 bushels, which was nearly a three-fold increase since 1860. The need is for more and larger grain crops of all sorts. Livestock farming calls for grain, hay and forage in ample measure.

### **Transportation**

Perhaps no county in North Carolina has made more wonderful progress in agricultural, educational, and industrial development within the last 25 years than Gaston. This has been made possible because of her advantageous transportation facilities.

Few counties of the state are more abundantly supplied with railroads and electric lines. The main line of the Southern Railway crosses the county east and west, the Carolina and Northwestern Railway traverses it north and south; the Seaboard Air Line Railway enters the county on the east side at Mt. Holly and swings north-westward, leaving the county near Alexis, and again enters it further west and crosses the northwest corner, passing through Cherryville. Besides these there is the Piedmont and Northern electric line that crosses the county in an east-west direction and does good business hauling both passengers and freight. No farm in the county is more than 8 miles from a railroad station.

The county has 76 miles of macadam roads, 16 miles of asphalt roads, and 250 miles of sand-clay roads that are as good as are to be found in many counties over the entire state. The cross country roads are not so good and become badly cut up during the winter months.

### **Manufacture**

Gaston is nationally famous as a cotton textile center. She has more cotton mills than any other county in the United States and more active spindles than any other county in the South. Only three counties in New England have more spindles. Named in order of importance they are: Bristol county, Massachusetts, Providence county, Rhode Island, and Middlesex county, Massachusetts. There are 90 mills and 1,012,696 spindles in Gaston county. Her next nearest competitor in the South is Greenville county, South Carolina, with 758,144 spindles.

Two main reasons have contributed to the wonderful success of Gaston's mills. First, she is located in a cotton growing territory and the cost of raw material is not so great as it is to mills in the North.

Second, these mills are situated in the densest rural-population area in the state. Her people together with the great numbers drawn from adjoining counties, furnish adequate labor supply to run the mills. Cotton mills have been found to be practical and successful in the South in densely populated areas of white tenant farmers. Elsewhere cotton mills are a hazardous venture. Counties with sparse white tenant populations in this and other states have few or no factories nor is it possible to maintain such factories successfully in such areas. Gaston being the most densely populated rural county in this state has, other conditions being equal, the best chance to operate mills successfully. When competent mill managements maintain wholesome mill and village conditions, pay reasonable wages, and evidence a human interest in their employes success is easily assured almost anywhere in a well defined area of North Carolina. The labor supply is practically unlimited in this area which lies like a reap hook, the handle reaching from Lincoln and Rutherford eastward to Mecklenburg, and the blade following the curve of the Southern Railway from Charlotte to Raleigh and on to Selma. There are fewer than 75,000 cotton mill operatives in North Carolina; but there are 200,000 white tenant farmers in North Carolina. Our labor supply is equal to a hundred percent increase in spindles and looms.

### **Towns**

Gaston has within her borders more towns than any other county in North Carolina. They owe their existence mainly to the mill business. Most of the towns are small and consist almost entirely of mill people who are enabled to exist because of the mills in the village. Gastonia, the largest town in the county, has a population of about 15,000. It is the county seat and chief commercial center. It has within its limits 41 cotton mills—far more than any other town or city in the state. It is a brisk, busy little city, with handsome church buildings, and a high school building in sight, to cost half a million dollars. Everything and everybody in Gastonia is vibrant with business.

A large part of the business activities of Gastonia is due to her efficient Chamber of Commerce. It is thoroughly wide-awake and active and has been well managed in the past. Its chief activity is to advertise the advantages offered in Gastonia and Gaston county. It has been instrumental in bringing in many newcomers and new concerns. The business men of the city are lined up behind this organization and are cognizant of its possibilities.

Belmont, Cherryville, Dallas, Mt. Holly, Bessemer City, Lowell, and McAdenville are all thriving towns. Kings Mountain, a prosperous town, lies partly in Gaston county. The smaller towns of Highshoals, Stanley, Mayworth, and Worth have each one or more cotton mills.

**Where Gaston Leads**

1st in Number of cotton mills, 1920.....	90
Leads the South and the United States.	
1st in Active spindles .....	1,012,606
Leads the South, and ranks 4th in this particular in the United States.	
1st in Density of rural population, people to the square mile in 1910.....	84.4
9th in Population, 1910 .....	37,063
3rd in Rural population increase 1900-10, percent.....	34.4
22nd in Birth rate per 1,000 population, 1914.....	34.8
16th in Total farm wealth, 1910 census.....	\$8,628,686
17th in Farm wealth increase, 1900 to 1910, percent.....	165
State average, 130.5 percent.	
31st in Increase in value of domestic animals, 1900-10 percent .....	118
8th in Total taxable property in 1918.....	\$21,068,775
7th in Tax value of farm lands compared with the census value, percent .....	73
10th in Professional taxes paid in 1917.....	\$418.00
Eighty-three lawyers, doctors, photographers, dentists, and the like in Gaston.	
20th in Improved roads, 1914, percent improved.....	31
12th in Per capita investment in school property, 1915-16..	\$6.24
19th in Taxes paid into the state treasury in excess of pensions and school money received, 1914.....	\$20,260
Eleven counties, all in the western part of the state, are dependent.	
23rd in Banks in 1914, ten in number, one bank for the following number of people.....	4,004
State average, one bank for every 4,800 people. United States average, one bank for every 3,700 people. Twelve banks in 1918 with invested capital of \$807,572, and deposits amounting to \$4,334,184.	
20th in Per capita bank resources, 1915.....	\$64.20
Total resources, \$2,689,000; state per capita, \$62.25. New Hanover led with \$432 per capita.	
32nd in Per capita bank capital, 1915.....	\$7.12
Ten banks with total capital of \$330,000. State per capita. \$4.80; New Hanover led with \$40.65.	
19th in Per capita bank loans and discounts, 1915.....	\$43.70
Total bank loans and discounts, \$1,888,519. State per capita, \$45.	

14th in Amount of land under cultivation; acres under cultivation .....	101,696
Idle land, 135,744 acres, or 57.2 percent of the total area. Reserving 50,000 acres for wood lot purposes and allowing 75 acres to each family, there is room for 1,140 new farm families in Gaston.	
10th in Cattle per 1,000 acres, 1910 census.....	37
State average, 23; United States average, 61.	
21st in Cattle increase, 1900-10, percent.....	27
State average increase, 12 percent. Caldwell increased 62 percent.	
28th in Investment in farm implements per acre.....	\$2.47
State average, \$2.10; United States average, \$2.52.	
20th in Horsepower; one work-animal for the following number of acres.....	22.69
State average, 25.85; United States average, 19.81.	
22nd in Annual farm wealth produced, 1910.....	\$2,179,082
This total covers both crops and animal products.	
13th in Oats production, total crop, bushels.....	59,080
The oats raised amounted to only 2.31 pints per work-animal per day.	
9th in Increase in oats production, 1900-10, percent.....	190

## Gaston's Problems and Their Solution

In the preceding chapter a few of the many things Gaston can pride herself in possessing have been enumerated. Every citizen takes pleasure in telling of the things in which his county leads or makes a capital showing. But it is just as important to consider the weaknesses of a county and to devise remedies for their cure. It is not the purpose of this chapter to point out the things of which Gaston is proud, but rather the ills that challenge patriotic concern and action. A few remedies are suggested here. For the most part the remedies for Gaston county deficiencies must be thought out and applied by the home students and the home folks—the public-spirited citizens of Gaston. A score or more such men and women are seeking to strengthen the weak places in Gaston county civilization. They have accomplished much in the past, and will accomplish vastly more in the future should they combine their ideas and energies and act in intelligent, hearty accord. The far-sighted and public-spirited Superintendent of Schools is endeavoring to give the people of the county the best of opportunities. And it is education of the right sort that strikes at the root of community ills. A few individuals with rare native endowments may prosper with little or no education, but not so with a whole community or county. No community can ever hope to rise unless it lifts all the people to the highest possible levels of culture, taste, and skill.

### Public School Education

1. The level of intelligence in a community is fairly well measured by the percent of school attendance of children of school age, and the number of illiterate people in the community. In both of these particulars Gaston makes a poor showing. There are 69 counties in the state that have a smaller percent of illiterates 10 years of age and over. The state average of white illiteracy is nearly three times the ratio for the United States, and the rate of Gaston is two percent higher than that of the state. One white person in every seven, 10 years old and over in Gaston, was illiterate in 1910. The illiterate white voters of Gaston numbered 879 in the last census year. They were 14 percent of all the white voters of the county. These men can neither read their ballots nor write their names, nevertheless they have the right to vote.

The number of illiterates is in direct ratio to non-school attendance. Gaston ranks low in the school attendance of both races. In 1910 only 72.7 percent of the white children 6 to 14 years of age went to school at all. More than a fourth of the white children of these

ages did not go to school for so much as a single day—1,682 of them in all. It is unwise for children of tender age to be kept out of school and allowed to work in cotton mills, except in cases of dire necessity, and such cases are few in Gaston. Every child who is kept out of school suffers a definite loss in his future earning power. It is said by educational authorities that each day spent in school will in after years net the student nine dollars in money. It is a good policy to invest time in education. But this is the least value of schooling. The true value and worth comes from being trained to think sanely and to act wisely on one's own initiative. The ignorant man is bound to be the physical slave of the man with an intelligent brain. He is destined to drag out a weary existence eating the bread earned by the sweat of his face. Ignorant people retard progress in any community and wisdom demands that every member of it be educated. Gaston is spending money for education more freely than the average county but she has not heretofore been enforcing the school attendance laws of the state, and is therefore not getting full value for every dollar she spends on public education.

2. Gaston ranks well when compared with the rest of the state in average salaries paid white rural teachers but not so with respect to colored teachers. The average annual pay of negro teachers about equals 20 days' pay of the most ignorant negro working in a shipyard or a brick plant.

A determined effort should be made in Gaston to increase the number of local tax districts. In 1914 only 14 of the 64 school districts levied a local tax for school support. This helps to account for the low expenditure of \$7.37 per \$1,000 of taxable property. In 1918 only 19 of the 67 rural white school districts levied a local school tax. Every school district should be a local tax district. It is so in Dare, the poorest county in the state. Only so may a larger school fund be obtained and only so can the interest of the community in education be stimulated. The people who levy a special tax on themselves are always the people who keep their children in school the greatest number of days.

3. Gaston needs more consolidated schools. Fifty-four percent of the schools were one-teacher schools in 1914, and the same percent holds for 1918. No progress in consolidation appears during these four years. This would not be so bad in one of the sparsely settled counties of the Tidewater country, but Gaston has the densest rural population in the state, and could most easily lead in this kind of modern progress. One-teacher schools cannot be as efficient as consolidated schools in a thickly settled rural county. Instead of 67 white country schools, it would be wise to redistrict the county and establish not more than 20 or 25 strong consolidated schools with six or seven teachers each. The pupils at a distance could be safely transported in

motor car trucks as in Edgecombe, Wake, and Orange. Family interest in small nearby schools ought to give way to community welfare in large, well equipped, and well supervised schools capable of serving effectively the needs of the various country communities.

4. Gaston does not rank well in church membership. Only 58 percent of her people, 10 years old and over, were on the rolls of any church in 1916; and 56 counties made a better showing. The people of these ages not on church rolls numbered 12,938. The deadliest menaces to country churches are farm tenancy, near-illiteracy, and sheer illiteracy. The curing of illiteracy is primarily a country church problem, and in self-defense if for no other reason the country churches must help to solve it. Churches do not prosper as a rule in regions blighted by farm tenancy and illiteracy. This outstanding fact has been proved beyond debate by the researches of the department of Rural Social Science at the University.

### **Farm System**

1. The tables at the end of this chapter show that Gaston does not possess a well-balanced farm system. Gaston county farmers do not grow too much cotton but they do not produce food and feed supplies in sufficient abundance. Gaston is not a self-feeding and therefore cannot be a self-financing farm community. It was not so in the census year nor is it so now. The money sent out of the county for food and feed supplies in 1910 amounted to two and a third million dollars. In less than four years a sum is spent for food and feed supplies that equals the farm wealth accumulated in Gaston during her entire history. Gaston needs to produce more feed for her farm animals, her farm families, and her mill centers. We may add that in 1919 something like five million dollars went out of the county to pay for bread and meat that could have been produced at home.

When these millions slip through the fingers of her farmers year by year, her accumulation of farm wealth will be slow and the totals saved will be small. In 1910 the per capita country wealth of Gaston was only \$275 and the average for the state was the meager sum of \$322. The average for the United States was \$994, and for Iowa, a self-feeding farm civilization, was \$3,386. "Bear in mind that the self-sustaining, self-protecting, self-elevating abilities of a community are based (1) upon its stored up wealth, and (2) upon the willingness of the community to convert its wealth into weal, its wealth into commonwealth, and its commonwealth into commonweal."

2. Gaston should change her farm system from tenancy and absentee landlordism to a home-and-farm-ownership basis. Almost exactly one-half or forty-nine percent of all Gaston farmers are tenants. They do not own the roofs they live under or the fields they labor in, and

therefore they cannot develop into the highest type of citizenship. Their interest in the land and the community usually extends over a period of one year. From a third to a fourth of them move every year. They rarely take an interest in the condition of the house they live in, or the field they cultivate, or, worst of all, in the welfare of the community in which they live. What interest could they have, when the chances are they will be in a new locality the next year? Their interest in better schools, better churches and Sunday schools, better roads, better law and order, and better community conditions in general is faint and feeble, as a rule. They live a careless, lax existence at variance with the civic ideals of the neighborhood. They are racked with suspicion of being cheated and ready for trouble with their landlords. The permanent prosperity of a community depends fundamentally on home- and farm-ownership. Intelligent citizens, bankers, merchants, and farmers should do their utmost to increase the ownership of farms in country regions and of homes in mill centers. The Standard Oil Company has definitely entered upon this policy for its employes. It is wisely casting an anchor to the windward in the stormy days ahead. The R. J. Reynolds Company is following suit. Home ownership by mill and factory operatives is a policy that the mill owners of Gaston can afford to think through.

3. Gaston ranks well in the ratio of land under cultivation, but still there are more than 135 thousand acres lying idle in the county. Less than 43 percent of the land was under cultivation in 1910. Reserving 50,000 acres for wood-lot purposes and allowing 75 acres to each family there is room for 1,140 new farm families in Gaston! An increase of around 50 percent in farm population and a safely balanced farm system by small home-owning farmers would mean better schools, better roads, greater prosperity, better business for trade centers, and more social life and liveliness in the country regions.

### **More Livestock in Gaston**

In cattle per 1,000 acres, Gaston makes a good showing when compared with the other counties of the state; but in nearly all other forms of livestock Gaston fails to make a creditable showing. The county is 70 percent below the level of even a lightly stocked farm area. There is room for a threefold increase in farm animals. She suffered absolute loss in the number of poultry, swine, and sheep during the ten-year period from 1900 to 1910, and still greater relative decreases between 1860 and 1910. Poultry and swine are the two cheapest forms of meat that any farmer can provide, for they can be fed and fattened largely on farm surpluses and wastes. Poultry on the farm is practically all profit. The general high level of prices for pork, poultry, and eggs for many years to come ought to stir



Gaston county farmers into activity in these directions. But more than this. The abiding prosperity of Gaston as a combined farm and city civilization depends upon safe and sane livestock farming. Her numerous towns must have meat and milk, butter and eggs. Gaston can accumulate wealth in abundance by producing these commodities at home. She needs to establish co-operative creameries and to form closer business relationships between country producers and city consumers. Her idle acres could be turned into profitable pastures if sown in grasses and clovers. She needs to import the best breeds of livestock and to establish her livestock farming on a sound basis at the very start. Scrubs and runts ought to disappear.

Her farm-life school and farm demonstration agent are invaluable helpers in establishing a safely balanced, prosperous agriculture in Gaston. They need to be supported and consulted. It will pay business men and farmers to co-operate with them heartily. It will take a long time to bring about any very great change in the farm system of Gaston, but there is no need for delay in making a beginning. Indeed a beginning has already been made and the census just closing will probably show marked improvements in the farm activities of the county.

First of all, the farms of Gaston must be self-feeding, at least so far as the standard staple food and feed crops are concerned. They have not been so in the past nor are they now. The philosophy Henry Grady uttered years ago should be followed in Gaston to-day. He said: "When every farmer in the South shall eat bread from his own fields and meat from his own pantries, and, disturbed by no condition and enslaved by no debt, shall, amid his teeming orchards and vineyards, dairies and barns, pitch his own crops in his own wisdom and grow them in independence, making cotton and tobacco a clean surplus, and selling these in his own time and his own chosen market, and not at a master's bidding, getting pay in cash and not in a receipted mortgage that discharges his debt but does not restore his freedom, then and not until then shall be the breaking of the fullness of a new day."

### **Coöperative Solution of Gaston Problems**

None of the problems that present themselves can be solved by the farmers alone. The larger interests of farmers, bankers, merchants, and consumers lie in co-operation, not in contest. When each class works with all its might and main for its own selfish ends, the benefits derived from the whole will be less than if all were unselfish servants of the common good.

Farmers, merchants, bankers, manufacturers, and transporters, are closely knit into an intricate whole of business interdependence. They are members of one body, and when one suffers, all suffer. In

order for the farmer to bridge the gulf between producers and consumers, he must have the help of bankers and supply-merchants. He must also have the help of boards of trade and transportation companies. The Gastonia Chamber of Commerce and the Greater Gaston Club have been efficient in working up county and city interest but their work in this direction is barely yet begun.

City civilization is dependent upon farm production. The business of the whole country is determined largely by farm conditions. Market prices in Wall Street change as the wires flash news of good or bad conditions in different farm regions. Poor crops and poor prices in the fall mean sad times for the merchants and ministers alike. We depend primarily upon the farmers' fields and forests for food, clothing, and shelter—the trinity of inescapable necessities in this work-a-day world. The demand for these on the one hand and the farmer's supply of raw materials for them on the other furnish for manufacturers, transporters, and merchants their business, their business opportunities, and the bulk of their fortunes. Over half the railway business of this country consists in transporting supplies to farmers and the products of the farm to the markets of the world.

Southern cities in particular are dependent upon the surrounding countryside for population, for renewal of population, for business and business genius, for civic and social conscience, and for spiritual guidance. Three-fourths of the men in authority in our churches were born and bred in the country; and nearly the same is true of our successful, influential men of affairs, the merchants, bankers, manufacturers, and lawyers. Five-sixths of the college professors and six-sevenths of the ministers of all denominations were born and reared in the country. On the other hand the country depends upon the cities for market opportunities, ready cash, and credit facilities; for manufactured commodities, the artifices of civilization, farm tools and machinery, the instruments of increased production, the articles of comfort and luxury in farm homes; and for ideals of progress and prosperity, material and social. Our town and country civilization are mutually dependent. This fact is fundamental for the nation as well as for Gaston county. The countryside must be efficient, prosperous, satisfying, and wholesome, or else the prosperity of Gastonia is built on shifting sands.

### **Mutual Prosperity**

It is well to remember that no city can grow fat in a lean countryside. Many cities in the nation have realized this fact and are doing all in their power to promote prosperity in the surrounding farm regions. They know that their prosperity depends largely upon the prosperity of the country regions roundabout; that better living conditions for the farmers in their trade territories mean larger business

and less disturbance in the cities. The city must help the farmers solve the problem of local markets for home-raised food and feed supplies; must help to convert them into instant ready cash at a fair price and profit. Any help short of this is a vain pretense and a hollow mockery.

The bankers of Gastonia and other Gaston towns can do more in a single year to promote a bread-and-meat, live-at-home system of farming in Gaston than our gospel of diversified farming is likely to effect in a lifetime. The Texas bankers see this fact clearly. They are refusing to discount a merchant's paper when it is protected by crop-liens based on cotton acreage alone. They will discount no crop-lien unless it contains a detailed written agreement by the farmer with his supply merchant to plant a certain acreage, usually about half the total, in specified food and feed crops. This kind of collateral changes the character of the merchant's business, but it increases its volume and bases it on principles of safety instead of hazardous risks.

The mill population of Gaston is better housed and better paid than in most other counties of the state, and far better than in the mill towns of New England; but the conditions in many centers of Gaston can be improved. Her mill owners have taken an active interest in the welfare of their operatives. They have been wise enough to conserve the life, health, and strength of their employes. They have been busy considering the problems of human efficiency as well as machine efficiency. The mill owners as a rule are actively interested in getting the children to go to school and to become sturdy in mind and body before entering the mills for life. Good schools have been provided in the mill towns, grounds have been set apart and equipped in many of the mill centers, and small parks have been laid out and beautified, as for instance at High Shoals.

Opportunities and wages are both better than they have been in the past, and most of the present-day ills are the direct result of the desire on the part of parents to make their children earn a living instead of going to school. Whenever under-age children are in the mills, the blame is apt to lie on the parents rather than on the mill owners. The parents are not educated as a rule and they fail to see why their children should be educated. The mill owners have cooperated with state laws very consistently. This much must be said in all fairness.

#### Where Gaston Lags

70th in Native white illiterates 10 years old and over in 1910, percent .....	14.5
State average, 12.3 percent; United States average, 4.2 percent.	

73rd in White school attendance, 6 to 14 years of age, in 1910, percent .....	72.7
White children of these ages not in school in Gaston, in 1910, numbered 1,682.	
69th in Negro school attendance, 6 to 14 years of age, percent .....	60.9
Negro children of these ages not in school, 849.	
79th in Death rate per 1,000 population in 1917.....	15.2
State rate was 14.1.	
Gaston's rate is 1.8 points worse than in 1914.	
Rate for the United States registration area was 14.	
57th in Church membership in 1916, percent.....	58
12,938 people, 10 years old and over, outside the church, or 42 percent of the population of these ages. State average of church membership 62 percent.	
74th in Salaries paid negro rural teachers, average in 1916.	\$110.00
In 1918 the average annual salary was \$96.	
59th in Local school tax districts in 1914, percent.....	21.7
14 local school tax districts; 50 white school districts had no local tax. Only 19 local tax districts in 1918.	
59th in School expenditures per \$1,000 worth of property in 1914 .....	\$7.37
McDowell first with \$20.83. State average \$8.03. It was \$10.40 on the \$1,000 in Gaston in 1918.	
68th in School attendance on enrollment in 1916, percent...	64.4
In 1918 it was only 60 percent. Henderson led with 86.2 percent. Mitchell was lowest with 51.2 percent. State average, 68.8 percent. The average in Gaston was only 60 percent in 1918—a loss of 4 percent in two years.	
44th in Rural schools (white) with two or more teachers in 1916, percent.....	46
In 1918, 55 percent had two or more teachers.	
54th in Average expenditures per high school pupil enrolled, 1915-16 .....	\$23.10
It is a decrease of \$6.71 from the previous year. Harnett led with \$65.13 per high school pupil enrolled; Halifax was lowest with \$8.37. State average, \$25.92.	

47th in Country wealth, per capita in 1910.....	\$275.00
Alleghany, \$560; State average, \$322; United States, \$994; Iowa, \$3,386. In 1913 in Gaston the per capita taxable wealth was only \$394.	
79th in Negro farm owners, percent of all negro farmers..	23
State average, 33. Negro farm owners in Gaston numbered 178. White farm owners numbered over 60 percent of all white farmers; in North Carolina they were 66 percent.	
62nd in Local taxation for schools, rate per \$1,000 assessed value, 1913-14 .....	\$4.80
Pamlico led with \$8.98. In 1917-18 the rate was \$5.04.	
79th in Poultry decreases, 1900-10, percent.....	.4
That is to say, 78 counties made a better showing. Twenty counties lost in poultry production and Gaston was one of these. In 1910 there were only 62,535 fowls. Johnston led with 127,254.	
41st in Swine per 1,000 acres, 1910 census.....	34
State average, 39; United States average, 66; Iowa, 263. In 1860 the swine in Gaston were 15,335, but in 1910 they were only 6,585.	
33rd in Swine decrease, 1900-10, percent.....	3
Gaston was one of the 69 counties that decreased in swine production from 1900-10.	
57th in Sheep losses, 1900-10, percent.....	64
In 1860 there were 5,386 sheep in Gaston, but in 1910 only 501.	
68th in Farm tenancy, 1910, percent.....	49.8
State average, 42.3 percent. Increase in farm tenancy in Gaston, 1900-10, was 5 percent. Forty-seven counties in the state decreased in farm tenancy. White owners in Gaston, 1,243; negro owners, 178. White farm tenants in Gaston, 810; negro tenants, 613. The landless, homeless white tenants and their families number about 4,000 souls; 1,116 are share tenants, and only 243 are cash or standing-rent tenants. Tenants raise cotton mainly and neglect food and feed crops.	
41st in Crop yielding power per acre in 1910.....	\$16.54

75th in Annual production of farm wealth per inhabitant..	\$69.60
State average, \$85. Average for the French farmers, \$126. Gaston's low average is largely due to the fact that a large part of the mill operatives are counted in her country population.	
86th in Food and feed production, per person.....	\$30.00
Needed, \$84 per person; deficit, \$54 per person.	
82nd in Corn production per person, in 1910, bushels.....	11
Needed per person per year, 31 bushels (for manufacture, man, and beast); deficit per person, 20 bushels. Total deficit for Gaston, 739,000 bushels. State average production per person, 15 bushels.	
48th in Wheat production per acre, in 1910, bushels.....	7
State average, 8 bushels per acre. Wayne ranked first with 30 bushels per acre.	
61st in Beef production per person, in 1910, pounds.....	21.6
State average, 33.8 pounds.	
92nd in Pork production per person, in 1910, pounds.....	19
State average, 93 pounds. Needed for home consumption, 122 pounds per person per year. Deficit, 103 pounds per person.	
84th in Poultry production per person, in 1910, fowls.....	4.46
Needed 12 fowls per person per year. Deficit, 7.54 fowls. Total deficit, 279,400 fowls.	
84th in Egg production in 1910; deficit, in dozens.....	335,000
Needed, 17.5 dozen per person per year. Produced 8.25 dozen, leaving a deficit of 9.25 dozen per person.	
82nd in Increase in farm sales of dairy products, 1900-10, percent .....	38
Total sales in 1910 were \$54,151. State increase 146 percent. Gaston produced 16 pounds of butter per inhabitant in 1910. The average amount needed was 48 pounds. Per capita deficit was 32 pounds per person.	
77th in Livestock products per person, in 1910.....	\$13.00
Alleghany, \$65; state average, \$17.	
71st in Per capita crop production.....	\$48.00
Total farm wealth produced was \$65 per person.	
90th in Bill for imported food and feed supplies in 1910...	\$2,378,000
In less than 4 years it equals the farm wealth accumulated in 71 years of history.	

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STATEMENT

THE CITIZENS NATIONAL BANK

OF GASTONIA, N. C.,  
At the Close of Business November 17, 1919

RESOURCES

Loans and discounts	\$2,178,244.15
Overdrafts	158.98
United States and other bonds	188,708.26
Stock in Federal Reserve Bank	4,500.00
Banking house, furniture and fixtures	20,000.00
Other real estate	13,388.49
Cash and due from banks	934,728.91
Total	\$3,339,728.79

LIABILITIES

Capital	\$ 100,000 00
Surplus and undivided profits (earned)	\$261,952.06
Less cash dividends paid stockholders	124,000.00
Circulation	100,000.00
Rediscounts	122,801.33
Deposits	2,878,975.40
Total	\$3,339,728.79

DIRECTORS—Andrew E. Moore, H. W. Cleveland, W. T. Rankin, A. G. Myers, C. B. Armstrong, D. M. Jones, W. D. Anderson

DEPOSITARY—State of North Carolina, Gaston County, City of Gastonia

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Commencing business in 1890, we have since that time sought opportunity to assist every enterprise which would add to the moral and industrial welfare of our county.

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R. R. RAY

M. T. WILSON

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